CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE FAMILY

PET Skills Acquisition in Parent/Adolescent Dyads

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Sources Statement

The present thesis describes original research undertaken in the Department of Psychology, University of Tasmania.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, any theories and techniques not my own have been acknowledged in the text.

To the memory of my father,

Fred Beresford Richardson,

who by his own example

taught me tolerance, acceptance,

affirmation and the peaceful

resolution of conflict.

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Abstract

Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) (Gordon, 1975) is a practical course teaching communication skills to parents, particularly listening, assertiveness and conflict resolution. Youth Effectiveness Training (YET) (Hall & Zener, 1981) teaches the same skills to teenagers from their own viewpoint. Both are aimed at improving the quality of family life, and at prevention of serious problems.

Research into PET has been largely concerned with attitudinal change, and there is an overwhelming need for investigation of behavioural outcomes. The present study attempted a behavioural measure of specific PET skills, utilising a three-minute video-recorded roleplay of a standardised conflict interaction between parent and adolescent. There were 13 parent/teenager dyads in the experimental group, and 11 similar pairs, matched as closely as possible, in the control group. The videoed interactions were put onto a single tape in random order and assessed "blind" by three skilled independent raters, using bi-polar visual analog scales especially constructed to measure listening and confrontation skills and conflict resolution. Results showed that the parents improved significantly in conflict resolution, and in confrontation skills as compared with the control group. On listening skills they improved considerably more than the control group, but the difference was not great enough to be statistically significant.

The teenagers in the experimental group improved significantly more than those in the control group in conflict resolution. Their gains in listening and confrontation skills were also greater than those of the control group, but the differences were not large enough to be regarded as statistically significant.

Standard questionnaires constructed to measure (a) attitudinal changes in parent-child relationships as an outcome of parent education (Parent Attitude Survey, Hereford,1963), (b) changes in self-concept (Self Esteem Inventory, Coopersmith, 1967) following the course, and (c) changes relating to expressed behaviour (FIRO-B, Schutz, 1967) were administered as part of the overall assessment, but no significant differences were found between the groups. However, the study showed that parent/adolescent dyads can change their interactions in a positive way using skills that can be spontaneously applied.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) is a program teaching skills to enable parents to be effective in a world which has changed markedly since they themselves were children. It is aimed both at strengthening family relationships and at developing young people who are responsible and self-motivated (Gordon, 1975).

Rapid social change has brought many problems to family life (Edgar, 1980). In Western countries especially, there has been a widespread reaction against authoritarianism, and a shift towards more egalitarian attitudes (Balson, 1981). But although attitudes have become more egalitarian, particularly among young, well-educated parents (Wood, 1985), parenting styles, language and behaviour have not changed very much (Gordon, 1989). What most parents actually do reflects very much the way they themselves were brought up.

The Need For Parent Training

As a result, many parents find that their family life is not working very well. Because they have experienced the frustration of trying to impose an outdated system that seems unworkable in today's context, many parents are ready and anxious to try a different method.

A number of programs have been devised to meet this need, and several of them are available in Australia, as they are in North America. One is Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) (Gordon, 1975) - also available in 25 countries

around the globe; another is Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1976). A further program is Responsive Parenting (Lerman, 1984). In some states of Australia, there are other options, as in Victoria, where another Adlerian-based program (STEP is Adlerian) devised by Professor Maurice Balson is offered.

These programs all insist that a missing value in many parent-child interactions today is respect, especially respect of parents for their children. Many parents do not see respect for individual children as the now crucial value it is. Family life would be revolutionised if parents would stop treating their children like puppies to be housebroken, and instead treated them with the courtesy they accord to other adults (Brown, 1976). Such respect both serves as a model and invites reciprocity. A British social scientist has identified personal respect as a fundamental need of human beings (Harre, 1980).

Baumrind (1980) pointed out that parents play a determining role in the way their children develop in intelligence, character and competencies. Children learn by insight, by training and by imitation. They have to learn not only about the realities of their physical environment, but also about more abstract social realities. Reciprocity, a governing principle in family interaction, is one of the most important. "Within a reciprocal and interacting system such as the family, individuals produce by their actions the environmental conditions that affect their own as well as others' behavior" (Baumrind, 1980, p. 640). The next most needed quality is that of flexibility - the ability to function effectively in a changing world. Baumrind also suggested that besides functioning with flexibility and in a reciprocal way, a mature adult needs to be able to postpone immediate gratification. For Baumrind, all these are important qualities needed in the effective family -to be modelled by parents and assimilated by children. It will be seen also that they are

not part of a family's value system, rather they are part of the process of attainment of that family's goals.

There is plenty of evidence that families are the strongest factor in the development and maintenance of human competence, and that the vital factor in this is the family's own internal dynamics, "the way family members relate to each other and the outside world" (Eastman, 1989, p. xvi). Family communication style and the way family members recognise and affirm each other's unique qualities are fundamental in the development of the mature adult. Here too lie the foundations of self-esteem. Personal competence and social skills are not the only benefits an individual acquires in the well-functioning family of origin. The success or failure of outside education also lies here. The social implications of family competence are far-reaching, yet there is very little training for parenthood. Where large families and extended families once provided knowledge and support for young parents, today there is little systematic preparation (Silcock, 1979). Anastasiow (1988) noted that particularly with poorer, less well-educated parents, the potential is high for producing children who are even more disadvantaged in both health and education. The cost to the nation is very great, yet such an outcome is preventable, and it is argued that parenting education should be mandatory for all.

There is increasing interest, particularly among middle class parents, in joining parenting classes in order to gain knowledge both of child development and family management. The various courses offered have been examined and discussed in several reviews (Davies, 1978; L'Abate, 1981; Eastman, 1983), and the advantages they offer have been considered particularly in the light of prevention.

A Preventive Approach

Preventive approaches to the widespread emotional problems suffered by many adolescents were advocated by Gordon from the beginning, and PET was early recognised as a preventive program (Levant, 1978). Having worked with "difficult" teenagers and their families, Gordon became disenchanted with the medical model of psychotherapy, and realised also that society would never be able to solve all its mental health problems by waiting till people had developed psychological disorders, and then setting out to treat them (Gordon, 1970). Furthermore, he became convinced that the teenagers brought to him for treatment were in fact perfectly healthy. They were coping to the best of their ability with the ways they were treated by their parents. Just as Bion (1959) had found in relation to groups where power was used for coercion, Gordon discovered that the youngsters, according to temperament, resorted to fighting, flight or submission.

The parents in their turn, were also healthy people. The real trouble lay in the kind of relationship each had with the other (Gordon, 1977b). Most of the parents, (many of them professionals with tertiary education), had no understanding of more recent psychological findings about the development of self-concept, a climate of acceptance, the effects of punishment, modelling theory, or problem solving. Most were trying hard to be responsible and effective parents and were very concerned when their children disappointed them. Usually they used the same kind of training methods their own parents had used, (except for a few who were deliberately the opposite). These methods appeared to Gordon to have much in common with dog training, both as to rewards and punishments, and in the patterns of communication, authority and discipline. In addition, there was a great deal of evidence that for many families the time-honoured procedures were ineffective, and for some, actually destructive.

Clearly, the preventive approach must be an educational one, moving away from the concept of illness and treatment. Gordon described how encouraged he was by the attitude of George Albee, who had challenged the wisdom of using the medical model in psychotherapy, and further inspired by the words of G. A. Miller, who in stressing the need for education to prevent maladaptive behaviours, had suggested that psychologists must find ways to "give psychology away to the public" (Gordon, 1977b, p. 175).

Gordon's Theory

Gordon first developed a new theory of parent effectiveness, and then built up a specific program based upon it. He pointed out that, while the theory was developed specifically for the parent-child relationship, it was really a model for all healthy human relationships. It took into account the fact that there was usually a power differential between two people in a relationship, that conflict was inevitable, and that it was possible to resolve it in a healthy, relationship-enhancing way (Gordon, 1970). The theory, Gordon explained, advances a model of a truly democratic relationship, in which people can relate to each other in mutual respect, friendship, love and peace, and thus provide an environment in which each can reach maximum potential. He also suggested that such a relationship would be therapeutic, i.e. facilitating healing and growth. It has been pointed out that there is an essential human need for such a relationship (Dominian, 1975, 1989).

The theory of healthy human relationships is presented (Gordon, 1970) as a set of principles for one person in a relationship. The requirements are the same for both persons, but Gordon pointed out that as the primary responsibility for initiation of change rests with the person in power, i.e. the parent, the focus is on the requirements for that person.

The Theory of Healthy Relationships (Gordon, 1970)

There are nine principles:

1. Feeling Accepting of the Other

I must feel quite accepting of the other. The more of his behavior I can accept, the better for his growth and health, because acceptance is a powerful therapeutic force.

2. Demonstrating Acceptance of the Other

Because it is one thing to feel accepting of the other person and another thing for him to perceive that acceptance, I must demonstrate or communicate my acceptance clearly and effectively.

3. Trying to Become Accepting of More of the Other's Behavior

I *must have a genuine desire to extend my area of acceptance - to try to bring about a condition in which less and less of the other's behavior is unacceptable to me. Or conversely, I must try to increase my "therapeutic potential" by becoming more accepting or by feeling acceptance more often.*

4. Becoming Aware of Nonaccepting Feelings

I *must learn to be aware of and admit to myself the existence of my non-accepting feelings toward the other's behavior whenever I have them.*

5. Communicating Unaccepting Feelings

I must also learn to act congruently or honestly. I must have the courage to be "transparently real" - to be what I am feeling. My communications must match my inner state.

6. Communicating My Unaccepting Feelings Nonevaluatively

Realizing that communicating my true feelings may be upsetting to another, depending upon how I do it, I must learn certain ways of communicating my feelings that are less threatening.

7. Refusing to Use Power in Conflict-Resolution

I must commit myself to refuse to use my power to resolve conflicts between myself and the other. Power, punishment, threats of punishment, unilaterally established limits, discipline through fear - none of these belongs in a healthy or therapeutic relationship between people or between groups.

8. Refusing to Give in to the Other's Use of Power

I must be unwilling to let the other impose his solution on me such that his needs are met and mine are not.

9. Resolving Conflicts By a "No-lose" Method

I must commit myself to use a "no-lose" method to resolve all the inevitable conflicts that occur in my relationship with the other.

Developing the Course

Gordon had had fifteen years' experience in developing and teaching human relations training for business and industrial executives. Here too he had found a similar lack of awareness of the effects of various styles of interpersonal communication. (Gordon, 1977b). However, he had established some important factors in the success of such training programs. They included the value of group training, the need for a nonthreatening environment, the importance of allowing and accepting resistance, the necessity of actual skills training, and the importance of modelling by the instructor. Together with the theory, all of these had to be taken into account in designing the course. Again, he had to deal with the most critical variable in human relationships, -that of the power differential between persons (Gordon, 1977b). A major dilemma for parents (and their adolescent offspring) was the growth of a struggle for power with both sides thinking only in terms of winning or losing (Gordon, 1970).

Gordon decided that the training course should be developed for the person with the greater power, in this case the parent. He had pointed out (Gordon, 1970) that negotiation was used frequently in disputes where both parties had equal power, that it was sought by parties with less power, and rarely considered by those in power. Parents who did not regard negotiation as a suitable technique of conflict resolution in their own domain were not alone. "Apparently human beings as yet have learned only that a democratic or no-lose method of conflict resolution is what you are forced to use when you do not have power over another. The idea that it can be used even when you do have power over another is not commonly accepted" (Gordon, 1970, p. 423).

From the first, PET was tailored to provide parents with skills in no-lose conflict resolution, and as essential pre-requisites for this, training in listening and assertiveness. It was a course focussed on goals which Gordon came to see were the same for the enhancement of all relationships, whether parent-child, teacher-pupil or boss-subordinate - "achieving open and honest two-way communication, creative problem solving, constructive conflict resolution, mutual goal-setting, teamwork and co-operation" (Gordon, 1975, p. xiv). It also set out to build up children's self-esteem and self-responsibility (Gordon, 1975).

The Sources of PET

Having trained with Carl Rogers, Gordon understood the value of empathic listening; he admired Abraham Maslow and was impressed with the absolute necessity for each individual to meet legitimate needs for healthy development. In addition he saw the possibilities of creative problem solving as suggested by John Dewey (1933, 1938). Gordon was able to effect a synthesis of these concepts into a logical program, bound together with his own understanding of problem ownership and his belief in the essential goodness of the people he wanted to help.

The concepts of PET and their practical applications in the course have wide-ranging empirical and theoretical bases. Rogers' client-centered therapy was linked to research from the beginning, and generated large numbers of studies of every kind from intensive clinical investigations to semantic differentials and Q-sorts (Shlien & Zimring, 1970). Over many years, Rogers expanded and tested his ideas of the characteristics of the helping relationship, encompassing genuineness, congruence, respect, empathy, warmth, and acceptance. Feelings acquired a new importance; understanding was essential. The authenticity of experience, the realisation of personal growth and change were ideas which challenged the old

static certainties (Rogers, 1961). Arguments about Rogerian therapy generally relate to its suitability for profound psychological disorders (Davison & Neale, 1982), and are irrelevant to PET.

Maslow too was originally an experimental psychologist, working in the field of dominance and sexuality in primates, and later with humans. His hierarchy of needs first appeared as a theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943), and he continued to expand and develop it. Human beings, he believed, are not moulded or shaped from the outside, but have within themselves the potential for creativeness, spontaneity, authenticity, caring for others, being able to love, and searching for truth. Striving for these is a sign of emotional health. On the other hand, those he described as deficiency-motivated were able only to pursue their own unmet needs (Hoffman, 1988). Later researchers such as Aronoff (1970, 1971) produced validation studies of the theory.

The assertiveness component in PET is based on the large body of experimental work on self-disclosure by Sidney M. Jourard (1964, 1971). Jourard was concerned about the need for human beings to be themselves among others rather than to hide their authenticity, to be honest and open. He queried why people generally chose semblance as being safer than disclosure, and pointed out that in concealing themselves they also failed to know themselves. Transparency was perceived as risky, but it led to personal growth, and to the deepening of authentic relationships with others.

The six-step process of problem-solving and conflict resolution so central to PET derives from the work of philosopher and educationalist John Dewey. For Dewey, the process of inquiry was itself experimental (Geiger, 1958), and successful inquiry must follow a pattern (Thayer, 1952). In *How we think* (Dewey, 1933) five steps are suggested to settle a problem, and in *Logic: the theory*

of Inquiry (Dewey, 1938) there are six steps. Basically the process calls for examination of the possibilities for solving a problem situation, and the ultimate choice of one that is suitable. In PET creativity is emphasised, and all the skills learnt are brought into play for the resolution of conflict.

The PET Course

The PET course consists of eight weekly sessions of three hours each. The three major groups of skills taught are concerned with empathic listening, (known as Active Listening), confrontation skills (which include components of assertiveness training) and skills for conflict resolution and family problem solving. Empathic listening needs a climate of genuine acceptance, which relates to the first three of Gordon's nine principles. Confrontation skills embody principles four, five and six, relating to self-awareness and non-evaluative communication of unaccepting feelings. The last three principles are concerned with the substitution of the "no-lose method " for the use of power, and cover problem solving and conflict resolution. The thrust of the course is detailed practice in a group setting which provides additional support for participants.

The first part of PET deals with understanding relationships. Group members learn to regard behaviour as acceptable or unacceptable, rather than "good' or "bad". It becomes clear that what is acceptable is influenced by three factors - the self, the environment and the child (the other). These variables exert differing rather than constant effects over time. The importance of being congruent, that is matching external expression to real internal feelings, is also emphasised. Early in the course participants learn to raise their awareness of feelings, their own and other people's - a crucial skill which is often lacking in our present culture. The principle of problem ownership is introduced to enable the parent to decide whether the helping skills or those of confrontation are needed. A simple and

effective visual model, the behaviour rectangle, (which Gordon is said to have drawn on a tablecloth to explain his system to a friend at dinner) enables parents to make quick decisions as to what to do in any situation. The basic skill in PET is Active Listening, a term first suggested to Gordon by Richard Farson (Gordon, 1977a).

Parents are early made aware, either by role playing or by written exercise, that most people, with the very best intentions, employ unhelpful or even destructive tactics with others who are experiencing a problem. It is pointed out that twelve typical responses, (designated *Roadblocks* in PET) are, in this situation actually inhibiting to the personal growth of the one to whom they are addressed. For this reason they are avoided by counsellors and therapists. These responses include ordering, warning, moralising, arguing, blaming, judging, name calling, analysing, probing, sarcasm, and even reassuring and praising. There are, of course, situations where most of them are perfectly legitimate (generally when the other is not upset over a personal problem). It is pointed out however, that name calling and sarcasm are almost always destructive, and best avoided in personal relationships.

When it is obvious that the child is worried or upset, the parent can be of real help by learning how to communicate true empathic understanding. Briefly the technique consists of feeding back the feelings and thought content disclosed by the child, so that the latter knows he is clearly understood. When nonjudgmental acceptance is demonstrated in this way, the child is enabled to see his problem more clearly, and to be free to work out the solution for himself. The method assumes that the child is his own best problem solver, and that he is perfectly capable of so doing. The difficulty for most parents is to abstain from giving advice or their own solutions, thus taking the responsibility away from the child, and at the same time

the opportunity for growth. It is rarely appreciated that when a child is upset or resentful, any attempt at teaching is certain to be ineffective. Active Listening should only be used when conditions are appropriate. This skill is taught first, essentially because it is needed in conjunction with both of the other major skills, Confrontation and Conflict Resolution.

The effective parent is assertive, and the key to assertiveness is self-disclosure (Zener, 1981). Self-disclosure is a help both to personal self-awareness and to the understanding of others. It enables a parent to be open, honest and clear with her children, and incidentally to model these desirable attributes. When a child is behaving unacceptably, the most effective message for the parent to send is first a description of the behaviour without blame, secondly a description of the parent's feelings about the behaviour, and thirdly, the concrete effect of that behaviour upon the parent. (Children can readily understand cost in terms of money or time). Such a message does not generate the same amount of anger and defensiveness as most blameful statements. It describes the parent rather than the child (hence the term "I-message") and therefore is not really open to question. It leaves the child free to help the parent, and to act responsibly instead of being resentful and unwilling. If the child is defensive however, the parent can "change gears" and active listen the feelings, before moving in again with the confronting message.

Other self-disclosing messages are the direct opposite of confrontation, but they are of prime importance to effective parents. They are positive and appreciative "I-messages." ("You-messages" in comparison, are often patronising. "You made a good choice"; "You're a kind girl at heart".) Positive "I-messages" on the other hand, are self-disclosing, and have a genuine ring about them.

"I was really pleased when I came in to the kitchen and found it all so spic and span". "I love the colours in your dress". "I was delighted when I walked into the bathroom this morning and found it all so beautiful". "I was very happy to see you had already brought in the cans". Any one of these is far more effective than a host of criticisms, which are often literally tuned out by the child. The trick is first to be clear about saying what is wanted, secondly to be patient for a little while until it is actually done, and last but most important, to be instant with appreciation. As one parent said, "Now I can see why nagging never works, and better still I don't have to".

In the PET course, the background to resolution of conflict is a discussion of the three possible methods of solving it. The first method involves the use of power or coercion ("I win - you lose"). The second method is equated with permissiveness ("You win - I lose") and the third is that recommended in PET, using Dewey's method of problem solving (Dewey, 1933, 1938), with six sequential steps. Gordon's adaptation, first used in 1962, was a pioneer of "Win - win" methods. It neatly combines Maslow's concept of need-meeting behaviour with the consideration of all possible solutions as put forward by Dewey. It depends on empathic understanding of the needs of others, an ability to be assertive about one's own needs, and to be creative about solutions. It involves self-control and mutual respect. It was using lateral thinking (De Bono, 1970) ahead of its time.

The six steps used for conflict resolution in PET are:

1. Defining the problem in terms of needs
2. Generating possible solutions
3. Evaluating the solutions
4. Deciding on a mutually acceptable solution

5. Implementing the solution

6. Evaluating the solution at a later date

It is pointed out that in most situations of conflict, antagonism is maintained because one party to the problem imposes a unilateral solution, moving in at Step 4, without going through the first three. Success in this form of conflict resolution depends on several factors. Most important is the understanding that no party to the dispute is going to impose a solution. Mutual agreement must be reached. Parents often feel threatened initially at the mere thought of such an abrogation of authority, but in fact they are safeguarded by the fact that neither side must ever agree to a solution that is not found truly acceptable. Indications that a particular solution is still unacceptable might be like the following examples, two from parents and one from a child:

"I really can't agree to your coming in after midnight". "I'm not comfortable with your staying at Jane's unles her mother has phoned me". "I don't think it's fair if Peter can watch "Neighbours" and I'm not allowed to see "GP" because it's after dinner".

Steps 1 and 2 are equally important, the first in looking at the problem in terms of needs. "I really need the car tonight to go to the airport, and you have to be at that lecture at the same time". The second step is also essential, in generating as many solutions as can possibly be suggested. "Well, what could we do ?" "I suppose I could drop you there on my way." "You could ask Ann for a lift." "I could ride my bike." "You could get a taxi." "I could borrow the works car." "Dad could come in on the bus." "There's a courtesy bus to the Sheraton." "Let's hire a balloon, helicopter," etc. It is crucial at this point that creativity is not inhibited by premature evaluation. ("No", "Yes, buts" please, until we get to the next step".) Some participants would never keep going if told "*That* wouldn't

work," or "That's the sort of thing you *would* say." Another point is that way out or impossible solutions are listed with impartiality and can even be funny and ease tensions.

At this point it might be interesting briefly to mention that several other problem-solving techniques use sequential steps: for example, D'Zurilla & Goldfried (1971) - five steps, later given the acronym SOLVE (Mckay, Davis & Fanning, 1981); Brammer (1973) - ten steps, and Janis and Mann (1977) - seven steps. The Harvard Negotiation Project (Fisher & Ury, 1983) suggested five steps for use in the public arena an internationally. The same sort of system is recommended in psychotherapy (Egan, 1986). Each of these techniques suggests looking at possible alternatives – "brainstorming" (Osborn, 1963; Maier, 1970; Egan, 1986). D'Zurilla and Goldfried (1971) and Egan (1986) regarded goal-setting as part of the process, while Fisher and Ury (1983) suggested "focussing on interests not positions". Janis and Mann (1977) mentioned "essential requirements". Brammer (1973) included clarifying the values underlying a personal choice, and stated that helpees must know what they need and desire, and what their priorities are. Gordon (1975) believed that looking at the problem in terms of the *needs* (Maslow, 1943) of all parties is fundamental. Doing this brings interpersonal skills into play, thus setting the stage for co-operation rather than competition. In such a situation, participants have to employ listening skills, to practise assertiveness and openness, to trust and show themselves trustworthy. There is no room for any hidden agenda (Lizzio, 1986).

Burton (1984) made a distinction between values or interests and needs. The former are specific to the goals of individuals, parties and cultures. They are subject to priorities and to change. Needs, on the other hand, relate to universal goals. Examples are the need for security and for identity.

The underlying philosophy of PET was expressed in the Nine Principles enunciated by Gordon (1970), and these in turn, were translated into the practical skills of the course itself. As such it not only challenged many of the commonly accepted traditions of parenting, stimulating considerable critical review, it also generated a good deal of experimental literature. These areas will be examined in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

THE PET LITERATURE

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Overview of the Literature

The PET literature is extremely complex, consisting of critiques of the philosophy and values of PET, practical evaluations which attempt to place PET in the wider context of parenting programs, several overlapping literature reviews which emphasise the empirical research, and more than 60 experimental studies, some 13 of which have been published. A number of questions are raised in this extensive body of work. The most obvious is that of methodology in research studies. Controversy has centred on this issue, since it was first raised by Rinn and Markle (1977), who argued that the studies were inadequate, and the worth of PET had not been satisfactorily established. The same criticisms have been repeated (Clarizio & McCoy,1983; Dembo, Sweitzer & Lauritzen, 1985) and extended to include the philosophy of PET (Krebs, 1987). A prime issue is the nature of parental power and how it is used. Davies (1978) suggested that the question of power is central, and that in attitudes to power lie the differences between various parenting programs. Criticisms of PET and warnings about possible harmful effects of the program were raised by Doherty and Ryder (1980), and again about its effectiveness by Taylor and Swan (1982), (although the conclusions of the latter appear to have been based on minimal data).

Chapter 2 consists of sections dealing with critical evaluations of PET, literature reviews, experimental studies, and Cedar's (1985) meta-analysis, and concludes with the rationale for the present study.

Critical Evaluations of PET

There are a number of critiques of PET, which may be classified as follows:

1. Critiques of PET philosophy (Doherty & Ryder,1980; Dobson 1982).

2. Critique of concept of power in PET (Barr, 1987).

3. PET as an available option (Davies, 1978; L'Abate, 1981).

Each of these will be set out and briefly discussed.

Critiques of PET Philosophy

Negative evaluations of PET by Doherty and Ryder (1980) and Dobson (1982) are both based on philosophical considerations. Doherty and Ryder (1980) raised several criticisms of PET: the "technological" language, the use of techniques in an affective relationship, the unilateral nature of the training, and the possibility that PET could be used in a manipulative way; they also suggest that Gordon sees the bonds between parent and child as fragile.

Further concerns are that parents will lose self-confidence because of possible mistakes made in parenting, that families may become divided if only one parent is trained, and that the dyadic model of one-to-one interaction between parent and child is too limited. It is suggested that involvement of the whole family in PET training would be an improvement, and that longitudinal follow-up studies of PET graduates and their families are very much needed (Doherty & Ryder, 1980).

The objections raised by Doherty and Ryder (1980) about the "quasi-technological language of PET" refer to the use of words (generally verbs) like "using" Active Listening, "sending" I-Messages which may not always "work", "shifting gears", "decreasing" the child's level of defensiveness. These authors complained that parent training is treated like any other kind of job training, and this is considered to be undesirable, even dangerous in an affective relationship. The parent may be "playing counsellor" or grossly manipulating the child. Use of a technique may even distance parent and child.

The language used in PET appears to be chosen deliberately to describe interpersonal communication in a way in which it has not previously been described. In the present author's experience parents rarely complain of the technical usage noted by Doherty and Ryder (1980). More often than not they are relieved to find that it is possible to analyse interpersonal exchanges. Terms like "I-Messages" certainly need explanation, though they may help as a mnemonic. More frequently, in Australia at least, participants find the American style of language foreign and off-putting. An experienced instructor can minimise this effect by "translating" as the need arises, and certainly by allowing plenty of discussion (a key requirement of PET, in any case). Doherty and Ryder (1980) were also concerned about what they regarded as over-enthusiastic promotion of PET, transforming the program into a quasi-religious movement, which can so easily become biased. There is some truth in this, although it may be more a question of style. However, it is true that such a concern is aggravated by uncritical acceptance of doubtful research. More serious is the question of manipulation or use of a "technique".

This question is a concern frequently raised by parents, generally before they have become proficient. Again in the nine years of experience of the present

author in teaching PET, most parents are astonished and delighted that they have found a way that "works" in the true sense. A troubled child who is really heard is not fussy about how it is done. Parents also discover that Active Listening does not "work" for their own goals. A parent who uses Active Listening to acquire information, and then turns it back on the child is unlikely to succeed twice. Active Listening will only succeed in the presence of genuineness, empathy and respect. Nor is there any need for the technique to be covert, as Doherty and Ryder (1980) alleged. Many parents are able to share their learning with the children.

Doherty and Ryder (1980) also pointed out that authoritarianism has been a successful parenting style for centuries and remains so in many cultures. Although this is so, there is plenty of evidence that it is no longer successful in Western civilisations (Baumrind, 1967, 1968; Eastman, 1989). As to the loss of confidence through making mistakes, parents taking PET have plenty of opportunities for affirmation and increase of self-confidence, through the program itself, and through being members of the group. Hughson (1980) saw parental confidence as potentially enhanced by PET, provided there are ample opportunities for discussion.

The question of the divisiveness of PET if only one parent is trained is a real one, to which there is no easy answer. It is possible for the trained parent to use the skills with the other parent, as well as with the children, though it *is* difficult especially in the early stages. If the change in one parent is seen as successful, very often the other parent will also take the course. Naturally, the best thing would be for both parents to train together, but it is often impossible. The trained parent often sees no alternative but to continue alone, a return to the previous system being quite unthinkable. Obviously, involvement of the whole family would be an improvement, as Doherty and Ryder (1980) suggested. More research is needed in

this area (Levant, 1983b). Finally, longitudinal follow-up studies of PET graduates and their families are certainly needed, a view which has been shared by a number of researchers (Levant, 1983a; Dembo, Sweitzer & Lauritzen, 1985) and which was also proposed by Gordon (1985).

Dobson (1982) saw the antiauthoritarian stance of PET as conducive only to chaos and confusion, and rejected the Rogerian concept of humanity as basically good. While he accepted that Active Listening is valuable, and that negotiation between parent and child can be useful in some circumstances, he considered that parental authority is essential, and equated it with leadership. Disrespect for authority has anarchy as its only alternative. He suggested that Gordon (1975) has confused the difference between authority and power, that he does not understand the proper role of authority in the home, that his humanistic viewpoint that children are innately good conflicts with the Judeo-Christian view, and that PET tends to weaken a parent's resolve to teach spiritual values. None of these are easy questions to answer, particularly the question of authority which will be separately discussed. The question of conflict with the Judeo-Christian view of fallen humanity would also be of concern to many parents. Nevertheless PET has been used extensively by Lutheran churches (Kieschnick, 1979; Gaulke, 1980), by Catholic education authorities (Hughson, 1980), and by the Uniting Church in Australia (L. Mavor, personal communication, 1990), suggesting that there is substantial and diverse support for its acceptance among Christians. PET is very clear about the best time for and manner of teaching any beliefs which are important to the parents. It is also worth noting that a study of moral development (Stanley, 1978) found that adolescents who participated with their parents in 25 hours of training in PET conflict resolution, and using Adlerian-style weekly family meetings, made significant gains in the development of moral reasoning, and maintained the improvement at a one-year follow-up.

Critique of the Concept of Power in PET

Barr (1987) believed that PET makes no distinction between constructive and abusive use of authority, and takes no cognizance of the distinction between authoritarian and authoritative as distinguished by Baumrind (1967, 1968). However, Gordon (1975) made it quite clear that for him the distinction must be made rather between authority -as-power and influence. There is no constructive use of power.

For the sake of clarification, it may be useful at this point to examine more closely these concepts of power and authority as presented in PET (Gordon, 1975) and compare them with those of Dobson (1982), Barr (1987), Baumrind (1967,1968,1971), Davies (1978), and Eastman (1989).

The use of power in personal relationships is viewed as damaging and destructive by Gordon (1975) and for this reason authoritarianism is rejected. Gordon views permissiveness as equally destructive, and points out that in this case, the power, either through the parent's abrogation of it, or by default, now rests with the child. In both cases, there is a flow of resentment from the powerless to the powerful. An explicit distinction is made between the concepts of authority as knowledge or expertise, and authority as power. An extension of the notion of authority was made (Gordon, 1983) when he postulated that in the case of the PET method of conflict resolution, the authority rested in the contract made by mutual agreement, which both parties undertook to respect. A safeguard for parents is the insistence that no party should agree to any solution about which there is the slightest doubt.

Baumrind (1968) suggested that parents should exercise legitimate power over the child up to about age six - which she called the Authority Inception Period.

Following Piaget (1965), she insisted that when the child has reached adolescence "power cannot and should not be used to legitimate authority" (Baumrind, 1968, p. 265). While Baumrind (1967, 1968) presented the authoritative model as the alternative to both authoritarianism and permissiveness, Gordon (1975) put forward the PET model in the same way. In some ways, the PET model appears to have features in common with Baumrind's fourth, and later alternative, which she termed "harmonious" (Baumrind, 1971).

Davies (1978) suggested that it is impossible to eliminate a power base within the family, but believes that parents should be willing to give their children more autonomy in a graduated way. Eastman (1989) pointed out that the way power is used is critical to family functioning. In the healthiest families, it is shared, but not equally, except by the parents towards each other. Gradual autonomy offered to adolescents is advisable, and is successful provided that earlier training is soundly based. It would seem that appropriate use of parental power in the early years is essential to set family norms of behaviour, and to establish a background from which the child can achieve gradual but systematic independence. It has been suggested (Kieschnick, 1979) that this kind of independence can nevertheless be achieved within the PET framework, working appropriately from the early years.

PET As An Option Among Parenting Programs

Davies (1978) discussed parenting programs available in Australia, presenting in some detail six different models. Three consist of specific training packages - PET (Gordon, 1975), STEP (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1976) and Parenting Skills (Abidin, 1976). Two are presented in books - Ginott (1965) and Satir (1972). The sixth is represented by a large number of behaviour modification programs.

It is initially pointed out that the behaviour modification programs are differently based from the humanistic programs, which emphasise communication skills. Major differences are to be found in the attitudes to reinforcement, conflict resolution and the accepted levels of parental power. All the programs accept the importance of encouraging an attitude of self-worth (Coopersmith, 1967).

Davies (1978) suggested that although the use of rewards and punishments is not favoured by either Gordon or Dreikurs, the parents' expression of positive (accepting) and negative (non-accepting) feelings to the child (PET), and the use of natural and logical consequences (STEP), can all be viewed as reinforcement techniques. (Gordon (1983) regarded the latter as a covert use of power). Both make use of more spontaneous mechanisms than do the planned contingencies of behaviour modification. However, more research is needed to compare the effectiveness of these techniques within the parent-child relationship. The question of parental power is central, and Davies (1978) suggested that it is not possible for the family to operate without it.

While all the programs are concerned with the development in the child of autonomy, co-operation, responsibilty and independence, they do not equally take into account more recent theories of cognitive development such as that of Piaget (1965).

Davies (1978) pointed out that Piaget sees the problem of moral development as bound up with the emergence of the child from his egocentricity and subsequent arrival at the stage of the reciprocal relations required for cooperation with others. This development is hindered in a situation where the parent wields power over the child. Furthermore, cognitive operations develop best in situations of co-operation. Thus the program which seeks to equalise the

power between adult and child is assisting the development of responsible, autonomous behaviour.

Gordon (1975) pointed out that children as well as parents need to use reasoning in arriving at mutually acceptable solutions to conflict. However, Piaget considered that before three years of age, the child is egocentric, and incapable of seeing the viewpoint of another. For this reason, Davies voiced a caution about the use of power-equalised conflict resolution in the early years and suggests that a gradual equalisation of power, as put forward by Ginott, may be preferable. Reliance on verbal methods of conflict resolution with very young children may also be problematic.

In conclusion, Davies suggested that an eclectic approach in parenting skills might be more valuable than too rigid an adherence to any one program. The reality of parent power, together with cautions about its inappropriate use, the need to regard the family as an interactive unit, the desirability of teaching parents about normal child development, and at the same time respecting their autonomy and common sense are all questions which need to be addressed. Therefore, Davies would seem to find the PET approach developmentally valuable except in the very early years, and to advocate a gradual progress towards the eventual autonomy of the child.

L'Abate (1981) in a comprehensive review of skills training programs, identified PET as preventive. Prevention is valuable because of the large number of functional and semifunctional couples or families who need help in specific areas. He distinguished three different levels of prevention:

(a) primary prevention, ewhich is concerned with large scale intervention with "normal" couples and families, and where most skill training programs are relevant and comparatively successful (b) secondary prevention, which deals with the

identification of relationships at risk, and where skill training programs may overlap with therapeutic approaches (c) tertiary prevention, which deals with problems that are beyond skill training, and which need a specific, tailor-made therapeutic approach.

He pointed out that prevention is just as important, and perhaps more important than treatment. The numbers involved are far greater than the number of dysfunctional couples and families, but their needs are just as real. Most families could benefit maximally by enhancing their awareness of each other, and at the same time improving their problem solving abilities, their decision-making patterns and their communication.

L'Abate (1981) identified two of the major obstacles to effective relationships, according to the PET model, as being inconsistency (between what is said and what is done) and incongruity (feeling one thing and saying another). Power is negotiated in the Effectiveness model. There is also a clear separation between personality and performance. Unconditional acceptance is directed towards the individual, but conditional non-acceptance is directed to the specific behaviour that is causing a problem to the pair.

The major assumption that parents and children both can and should behave as adults both in confrontation and conflict resolution indicates that the main target of the program is prevention, and that it is therefore aimed at functional and mildly dysfunctional parents. The point is made that "skill training programs cannot and will not apply to very chaotic couples and families, couples and families in crisis (death, suicide, separation, abandonment) uncooperative couples and families, and families in which the symptomatology is such that only professional help may be relevant" (L'Abate, 1981, p. 633).

A similar point was made by Griffin (1980) when he suggested that PET alone would not cope with the diverse range of problems which arise in clinical practice. But as there was still a need for effective communication, his suggestion was a hierarchical model, using a combination of PET and clinical intervention at various specific levels.

As a family therapist, L'Abate (1981) supported the preventive approach of PET, and believed it to be effective as a skills training program.

PET Literature Reviews

Six items will be considered in this section. There are three major reviews of the PET literature, and two shorter reviews. In addition, there is Zener's (1981) list of 48 studies. They will be grouped as follows:

Major Reviews

1. Rinn and Markle (1977) with 14 studies,

2. Dembo, Sweitzer and Lauritzen (1985), 21 studies,

3. Levant (1983a), 24 studies.

Shorter Reviews

4. Schultz (1985) : review of comparative studies

5. Krebs (1986) : three models of parenting programs as well as comparative studies

Effectiveness Training List of Studies

6. The list of 48 PET studies compiled by Zener (1981).

Major Reviews

Rinn and Markle (1977). Early empirical investigations of PET suffered from the same difficulties as beset social skills and assertiveness training programs - a situation well discussed by Curran (1979). Rinn and Markle's (1977) critical review of the early studies pointed out many methodological problems. It was recommended that future investigations should include attention to design,

assessment of both process and outcome variables, and that there should be more use of standard instruments.

Of the 14 studies presented by Rinn and Markle (1977), only one had been published (Larson, 1972), and its results were questioned due to lack of inferential statistics. Seven were doctoral dissertations, one a master's thesis, four were noted as "unpublished manuscripts" and one was not given any description. Because the research literature was "not readily accessible to researchers and practitioners" (Rinn & Markle, 1977, p. 95), the review was intended to summarise and critically evaluate the outcomes of PET research. The studies were divided into two groups:

(a) Single-group outcome studies

(b) Control-group outcome studies.

While the control-group studies were considered to be the more powerful, none of the studies was thought rigorous enough to establish the effectiveness of the program being investigated. Methodological problems included: (a) lack of random assignment of subjects to groups (b) reliance on self-report data rather than objective behavioural measures (c) inappropriate statistical procedures (d) absence of adequate control groups (e) disregard for demand characteristics (f) absence of long-term follow-ups.

Rinn and Markle (1977) acknowledged that these problems were general in the research literature involving psychotherapy, and not specific to PET. They concluded, however, that the available data did not support the assumption that PET was effective. It was unfortunate that "both the quality and the results of PET *research* (italics added) have been disheartening" (Rinn & Markle, 1977, p. 107) but Gordon was complimented for his pioneering efforts in educating parents. The

suggestion was also made that the PET administration should initiate a systematic program of research and evaluation.

Eastman (1983) pointed out that Rinn and Markle (1977) assume that the traditional empirical design is mandatory for the study of human groups. This view has been questioned in view of the constraints that arise due to the need to respect family privacy, particularly in volunteer and self-selected groups. It may in fact be impossible to fulfil all their criteria in any one study. She cited Gurman and Kniskern (1981), who argued that it is impossible to have a true control group or truly match experimental subjects and controls, and that to delay voluntary participation in a program may even be unethical. Eastman also pointed out that the results of self-report studies and studies without control groups are consistent with those using traditional empirical design. In addition, converging results are shown in studies which use combinations of self-report, reports by significant others and objective measures, while assessments by self-report and participant observation tend also to give reliable data.

The review by Rinn and Markle (1977) alerted researchers to deficiencies in PET studies, and offered valuable guidelines for future investigations. It was unfortunate that its criticisms were seen as applicable to PET itself, and that this view was taken up (Clarizio & McCoy, 1983) to reappear nearly a decade later (Krebs, 1986). One reason was the paucity of well-designed studies, and another the fact that Gordon (1980) had himself cited the earlier work.

Gordon (1980) included many of the unpublished studies in support of his claims for PET, and appeared to ignore the question of methodological inadequacy (Cedar, 1985). Levant (1983a) suggested that the presence of so many methodological problems in the studies cited was misleading because it obscured the actual value of the program. This view was judged correct by Cedar (1985) in

the light of his meta-analysis. In this circumstance perhaps lies the origin of much of the negative attitude to PET in the literature.

Dembo, Sweitzer and Lauritzen (1985). In their review of three types of parent education programs - Behavioural, PET and Adlerian, Dembo, Sweitzer and Lauritzen (1985) used 21 PET studies. Eight of them were featured by Rinn and Markle (1977) and 12 by Levant (1983), seven being included by both. Dembo et al. (1985) included only three published PET studies plus two PET comparison studies, whereas they have 15 published behavioural studies, and nine published Adlerian studies. They pointed out the same inadequacies in the PET studies as did Rinn and Markle (1977) and Levant (1983), and surmised that unpublished studies may not have gone through the rigorous review process that is imposed by most referreed journals. Nevertheless they were included since they were cited by Gordon, who recognised their variable quality but stated that they showed that PET produces important changes in parents and subsequent positive effects on children (Gordon, 1980). Dembo et al. (1985) disputed this claim on the available evidence. They pointed to one (unpublished) PET study (Miles, 1974) as being better designed, making no mention of the three superior investigations favoured by Levant (1983a), (see below) although two were included in their review (Geffen, 1977; Mee, 1977). In analysing the quality of the various studies, Dembo et al. (1985) gave special attention to the size of groups, leader qualification, use of control groups, random assignment to groups, specificity of methods and procedures, use of multiple-criteria outcome measures and follow-up assessment. Research was needed to establish what population variables should be controlled where random assignment was not possible. There was a need for development of sensitive new outcome measures. Furthermore, complete factual information should be provided for prospective participants, including validation by research, possible negative effects, qualifications of leaders, and the rights of parents with

regard to confidentiality and participation. This, they believed, would counterbalance the emotional success stories offered by Gordon (1980), a view shared by Doherty and Ryder (1980). There is a need for a factual handbook about PET, in order to give parents some objective idea of the program, which as Doherty and Ryder (1980) pointed out, may very well challenge their world view.

Levant (1983a) In his comprehensive review of client-centered skills training programs for the family, Levant (1983a) included the following categories: (a) Training for Treatment (b) Training-as-Treatment (c) Training for Enhancement.

Parental programs were placed in the training for enhancement section, a view which accorded with that of L'Abate (1981). Listed were 24 PET outcome studies, nine of which had already been evaluated by Rinn and Markle (1977). The focus was on the unpublished doctoral dissertations and published articles, leaving out unpublished, single-group, analogue and master's thesis studies. Once again many methodological problems were found in the studies under review. However, three studies (Geffen, 1977; Giannotti, 1979; Mee, 1977), all doctoral dissertations, and none of which was published, met Levant's minimal criteria for an adequate study: i.e., use of a nonattendant control group, random assignment to condition, use of standard PET procedures, employment of standardised dependent measures and appropriate use of inferential statistical tests. These three studies, therefore, produced a "modest degree of support for the efficacy of PET, in contrast to the conclusions of the earlier review by Rinn and Markle (1977) and of a recent critique (Doherty & Ryder, 1980)" (Levant, 1983a, p. 41).

It would seem that in spite of disagreement from among the major reviewers, the efficacy of the PET program was accorded some support.

Shorter Reviews

Schultz (1985). A short review of comparative studies (Schultz, 1985) again pointed out the methodological problems found in some of the investigations cited. Of the seven studies listed, four had been published, and these plus one other were included by Levant(1983a). Two were cited in the Dembo et al. (1985) study. Schultz recognised the extreme difficulty of mounting impeccable research in the parent education area, and proposed a "continuum of fallibility" along which researchers must strive to improve. Progress is dependent on the establishment of a firm empirical foundation and could be helped by education of the public.

Krebs (1986). Krebs (1986) presented a summary of research reported on parenting programs from (a) behavioural (b) Adlerian and (c) communication approaches, which were PET based. In the accompanying table, four empirical investigations relative to PET were shown, juxtaposed with Doherty and Ryder (1980) and Rinn and Markle (1977). Three of the empirical studies cited were included by Levant (1981) and two by Dembo et al. (1985). Rinn and Markle (1977) expressed reservations about PET on the grounds that the available data did not support the assumption that the program was effective, i.e., the research was flawed or inadequate. However, Krebs (1986) maintained that Rinn and Markle presented a "highly critical commentary on PET" as did Doherty and Ryder (1980). The latter, in fact, criticised the PET philosophy.

Effectiveness Training List of Studies

Zener (1981). Zener's (1981) summary of research, published by Effectiveness Training, documented 48 PET studies, 14 of which were included in the Rinn and Markle (1977) critique. A brief description was given of each study, and there was a table of outcomes in relation to parents and to children. Readers were advised to contact the original sources or university libraries for further information. This was

not a technical document, and there was no methodological evaluation of the studies. However, it was a useful list of the PET studies to 1981.

Of those included, 18 were unpublished theses, 16 were abstracted in Dissertations International, four were reports for hospitals, one a report for a school, and seven were published in journals. Some methodological problems were noted, but not all those pointed out by Rinn and Markle (1977). Outcomes reported for parents included an increase in self-confidence, increased acceptance of their children, increased trust, more understanding of their children's behaviour, an increase in democratic attitudes with a concomitant decrease in authoritarian attitudes and practices; improvement in self-esteem, reduction in anxiety, improved communication skills and improved marital relationships. Mothers and fathers made equal gains in overall positive parental attitudes. Children of PET parents showed an increase in self-esteem, and a decrease in inappropriate and disruptive behaviours (Zener, 1981).

It can be seen that there is little consensus about which studies are acceptable, and that the literature is highly confusing. The most stringent criteria to be applied to the studies were those of Levant (1983a). It is, therefore, interesting to note that his review suggested some support for the PET program.

Empirical Studies of PET

As has been shown, a great deal of PET outcome research has consisted of unpublished studies, most of which have been criticised on methodological grounds (Rinn & Markle, 1977; Levant, 1983a; Dembo, Sweitzer & Lauritzen, 1985). Nine *published* studies have been referred to in the reviews and in Zener's (1981) list. These include Schultz, Nystul and Law (1980) and Schultz and Nystul (1980). Four others are included in the present study: Schultz, (1981), Schultz and Khan

(1982), Root and Levant, (1986), and Wood and Davidson, (1987) - making 13 published studies to date. Five of the studies will be reviewed here, together with one well-designed, unpublished study (Hughson, 1980). These studies are comparatively recent, dating from 1980 to 1987. They included measurement of attitudinal outcomes, progressing from PET group attitudinal changes (Hughson, 1980) to specific attitudinal changes in fathers, mothers and children after parents' participation in PET (Schultz, 1981). Maintenance of positive attitudinal change at a 6-month follow-up is reported (Root & Levant, 1984). Comparative outcomes are shown using three different models including two PET groups with posttests at 1 month and 12 months respectively (Schultz, Nystul & Law, 1980). Changes in short-term behavioural variables following PET were investigated in two studies, the first a comparative study including PET (Schultz & Nystul, 1980) and the second confining attention to PET outcomes (Schultz & Khan, 1982), and finally the acquisition of a cognitive skill structure in applying PET was demonstrated (Wood & Davidson, 1987).

Each of the studies chosen meets the following criteria: (a) appropriate use of inferential statistics (b) use of a nonattendant control group (c) use of standard dependent measures (d) standard presentation of PET.

With respect to the last of these criteria, PET is normally presented in 8 weekly sessions of 3 hours. However, reasonable variations in the time schedule can be arranged officially to suit particular groups.

Among these studies, only two, Schultz, Nystul and Law (1980) and Schultz and Nystul (1980) reported random allocation to groups, and one used a wait-list control (Schultz & Khan, 1982). Each of these conditions is a sine qua non for Rinn and Markle (1977) and for Levant (1983a). These procedures are experimentally desirable, but in practice they are often impossible (Dembo,

Sweitzer & Lauritsen, 1985; Eastman, 1983). In addition, they have certain disadvantages. Parents are frequently unwilling to be part of a PET program which imposes such restrictions, and so studies which employ random allocation and a wait-list control are not necessarily utilising a representative sample of parents. More amenable parents may respond differently to parent training programs. Furthermore, if they feel themselves in need of parent training they may regard the wait-list control procedure as unethical or inconsiderate, and this may affect their responses in either the experimental or control condition. Obtaining comparable training and control groups by matching is also intrinsically fallible, but not necessarily fundamentally inferior to random allocation. A superior strategy would involve converging operations using both methods and assessing comparability of outcomes.

Unpublished Study

In the first of the studies, Hughson (1980) set out to investigate parental attitude changes, knowledge of communication skills, and children's perception of parental behaviour. There were two experimental groups (n=19) and a control group (n=18), all obtained through a notice from the schools sent home to parents via their children. Care was taken to ensure that the evaluator, who was responsible for administration of the measures, was separate from the experimenter. The parents were middle-income, from similar socio-economic backgrounds, with at least one child at a Catholic primary school, and predominantly females not in paid employment. Most were aged between 25 and 35 years and all were volunteers. On demographic variables of age and income, the two experimental groups differed, and the control group came in between. The occupational status of the second experimental group was higher than that of the other two groups. It was not possible to randomly allocate participants to experimental treatment conditions,

and a quasi- experimental design was used to compensate in part for this. The design involved a baseline assessment of both experimental and control groups prior to the PET course. A further measure to eliminate possible bias was the use of a residual gain score analysis technique on pre- and post treatment scores. Assessment instruments were the Parent Attitude Survey (PAS) (Hereford, 1963), the Parent Concerns Checklist (Hanley, 1972), the What I Would Do Questionnaire (constructed for the study), the Children's Report of Parent Behaviour Inventory (Schaefer, 1965), a General Background Questionnaire, a Parent Evaluation and Parent Objectives. Hughson found that parents changed in attitudes towards their children in ways conducive to improved relationships, encouraging more autonomy and self-reliance. Significant gains were made on three of the five subscales of the Hereford Parent Attitude Survey - i.e., on Acceptance, Understanding and Trust. However, she pointed out that they had not, by the end of the course, shown a change in the overall pattern of parental concerns, for instance in prescriptive matters like disobedience. (This would apply where there was a previously held authoritarian framework). Suggested reasons were a lag in behavioural change following attitudinal changes, inability of the measures used to tap the change, or too short a time in the course to realise behavioural changes. However, a trend in a positive direction towards confidence in the role of parent was noted. The parents' knowledge of communication skills also increased significantly. Children's perception of parent's behaviour did not change following PET.

Hughson (1980) found the shortness of time for the PET course of great concern. Individuals have very different rates of learning, and their needs vary. She referred to the model of Schein (1973) which suggests that in attitude change there must first be an "unfreezing" of existing attitudes and beliefs before new learning can occur. The new attitudes must then be "refrozen" into the existing personal framework and style. The PET course provides a safe and supportive

environment for the first process, and offers relevant and coherent new learning. For most participants, the unfreezing process had already begun as a result of their experiences in parenting, and most reported uncertainties as to ways of handling relationships within the family. However, she believed it was doubtful if eight weeks was sufficient to stabilise the change, at least for many people. Support programs or groups were suggested as ways of filling this need. Hughson's suggestion of the "lack of flexibility" of the program in this regard referred to the schedule rather than the contents of the program. It was pointed out however that an experienced instructor can deal with this by allowing for plenty of discussion by participants of personal concerns and problems.

Published Studies

In the next study chosen, Schultz (1981) suggested that parental participation in PET was influential in providing positive attitudinal outcomes for specific family members. Three separate studies investigated the effect of PET on (a) the father, (b) the mother and (c) the child. The mothers and fathers were aged between 23 and 50 years and in the middle to upper socio-economic range, all in normal, intact families. The children were aged between 4 and 8 years. The parents attended the PET course together. The study on the mother was a replication of the PET component in the investigation reported by Schultz, Nystul and Law (1980), using the same control group. Studies on the father and the child were breaking new ground. Instruments used for the parents were the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) Form Q4 (Schludermann & Schludermann, 1977) and the Attitude Toward the Freedom of Children (ATFC) Scale II (Koch, Dentler, Dysart and Streit (1934). Children were administered the Family Relations Test (Bene & Anthony, 1957).

It was concluded that fathers who participated in PET were more likely than controls to decrease in authoritarian attitudes, and to increase in democratic attitudes. In the study of mothers, it was shown that changes in short-term variables, in maternal attitudes towards child-rearing, and towards the freedom of children were demonstrated as an outcome of PET. Investigation of the attitudes of the child resulted in three conclusions: there was significant increase in the positive relationship between the child and the father, and in the positive relationship with the mother; there was also a significant increase in the negative relationship with the father. It was suggested that this result indicated a certain amount of ambivalence within the child. Another interpretation might suggest an overall increase in the parameters of relationship with the father. There was no increase in the negative relationship with the mother.

The next study investigated attitude changes in rural parents following a PET course (Root & Levant, 1984). The experimental subjects were 30 parents who responded to advertisements in a school newsletter. Seven respondents were assigned to the control group and a further eight were obtained by asking school staff to participate. There were only two males in each group. All the parents came from a somewhat depressed rural area. Significant differences between the experimental and control groups were found on two subscales of the Hereford Parent Attitude Survey - Understanding and Trust. The parents taking PET showed greater increases on both measures, a result which held up at the 6 month follow-up. As there was no significant difference on the three other subscales, this finding shows that the PET course was moderately effective with the population studied. No significant changes were found in the grades or career-maturity of the children whose parents took the course. The interest of this study lay in the socio-economic background of the subjects, the reported maintenance of the parental improvement

at the 6-month follow up, and for purposes of comparison, in the two scales of the Hereford PAS upon which the parents showed significant improvement - Understanding and Trust. Hughson (1980) found significant improvement on three of the scales - Acceptance, Understanding and Trust.

In a comparative study with three different theoretical models of parent group education, Schultz, Nystul and Law (1980) investigated the production and maintenance of maternal attitude change. The models were PET, Behavior Modification (BMod), and Adlerian Mother Study Groups (APS). Also included in the design were a Placebo group (P), and a nonattendant control group (NAC). The subjects, who were randomly allocated to each of the five groups, were 120 mothers in the middle socio-economic range, and were white Caucasians, from intact families and aged between 23 and 50. Matching as an adjunct to randomisation (Campbell & Stanley, 1966) was used. The instruments utilised were the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) Mother's Q4 form (Schludermann & Schludermann, 1977); the Attitude Towards the Freedom of Children (ATFC) Scale II (Koch, Dentler, Dysart & Streit (1934); and a parental rating of improvement (PRI) especially designed for the study, after Patterson and Reid (1973).

The study focussed not only on possible change but also on the direction of change. Attitudinal outcomes both short term and 12 months after treatment were analysed. All three models produced significantly greater attitude change than occurred in the control group. There were no significant attitudinal differences among the groups before the treatment. The PET and APS groups were shown to be more likely than the BMod, P and NAC groups to increase in democratic attitudes, with the PET group showing significant change in this direction, and moving away from authoritarian attitudes. The PET and APS groups differed

markedly in their approach to family conflict, with the APS group more likely to withdraw and the PET tending strongly toward confrontation. Both PET groups (one tested 1 month and the other 12 months after the course), were shown to hold significantly more liberal attitudes towards the freedom of children than the control group, as did the APS (highest mean on this variable) and the BMod groups. The experimenters concluded that not only does parent group education produce long-lasting attitudinal change but that the course content rather than the attendance levels or the group experience is the significant factor. The 12-month follow-up is of special interest, extending beyond that reported by Root and Levant (1984). Other valuable outcomes shown to result from PET include the trend towards greater freedom for children, more democratic attitudes and movement away from authoritarianism on the part of mothers, and the fact that they were shown to be able to be assertive in family conflict. Also of interest is the finding that the course rather than the group experience was the major agent of change.

This study was criticised by Levant (1983a) partly on the grounds that the PET presentation was not standard, as it was given in 10 sessions of one and a half hours each, instead of 8 sessions of three hours each. Although this results in a shorter course, it is possible for authorised instructors to vary the presentation timing within reason to suit particular groups. The greater length of 10 weeks, plus the fact that the teaching groups were small would largely compensate for the difference. In any case, with a longer presentation, it would be expected that the difference between the PET group and the others would increase. The criticism was also made (Levant, 1983a) that the loss of subjects at the follow-up might have introduced selection bias. It is possible that this could have had an influence on the group result, in the sense suggested by Bergin (1964) that although some participants in psychotherapy improve, others may deteriorate, and not even remain in the follow-up assessment.

Progressing from the initial attitudinal investigation reported by Schultz, Nystul and Law (1980), Schultz and Nystul (1980) compared the relative ability of the three models of parent group education (BMod, APS and PET) to influence mother-child interaction as demonstrated by structured tasks recorded on videotape. This study was perhaps the first to look at videotaped behavioural interactions as outcomes of participation in PET. There were five groups. Groups 1, 2, 3, and 5 were drawn from the PET, APS, BMod and control groups of the initial study. Group 4 was drawn from a pool of PET graduates of one month. There were 47 mother-child dyads in the study. The experimenters used two structured tasks for their measures of mother-child interaction. Twenty interaction-behaviour variables were assessed using an instrument designed specifically for the task (in the absence of previous similar research). The measure was designed to assess the broad categories of respect, dominance, warmth, dependence and independence of the child, disagreement and encouragement. The videotape recording made it possible to score both verbal and nonverbal behaviour.

Results showed that the PET and BMod models demonstrated the ability to influence mother-child interaction behaviour as measured by the variables used. There was a significant difference between the long- and short-term PET groups, suggesting that interaction behaviour patterns change over a period of time after treatment. The change was described as a behavioural change to match attitudinal change. Both verbal and nonverbal behaviours were featured in the 20 short-term variables measured. The role-playing and practice of microskills as featured in the PET and BMod models, as well as their specific cognitive structuring were considered to have contributed to the strong effect of the PET and BMod models as compared with that of the APS, which was more philosophically oriented and failed to produce significant behavioural change. It was suggested that a further study

might investigate another Adlerian-based program, STEP, which does utilise role-playing and skills practice.

Replicating the empirical investigation of behavioural outcomes in relation to PET, Schultz and Kahn (1982) investigated mother-child interactions of PET graduates one month after completion of the course, and compared them with those of control mothers. Using the measure described above, now named the Mother-Child Interaction Measure (M-CIM) (Schultz & Nystul, 1980), Schultz and Khan examined short term behavioural outcomes of PET in two groups of 7 mother-child dyads one month after treatment. Twenty short-term variables were assessed, and the interactions were videorecorded. The variables were: Praise, urging, negative encouragement, mother holds puzzlepiece, mother points, mother holds model, child talks, touching, mother talks, mother speaks first, mother speaks last, mother passively accepts, mother disagrees, mother seeks child's opinion, child speaks first, child speaks last, child passively accepts, child disagrees, child asks for help,child rejects help. It was confirmed that the short-term behavioural variables demonstrated more mutuality, warmth and reciprocity in the PET mothers than in the controls.

Moving into the area of cognitive restructuring, Wood and Davidson (1987) found that parents who had taken the course acquired new cognitive skills in applying PET. Subjects were 7 mothers and 2 fathers of middle class socio-economic status. Random allocation was not feasible because of the small number of volunteers, and because the parents were anxious to take the course as soon as possible. A control group matched by number and ages of children was obtained from the local primary school. Measures included the Parent-Child Response Sheet (PCRS), the Parent Attitude Scale (PAS), both constructed for the study, and the Moos Family Environment Scale. In addition, specific objectives for the course

were set by the subjects in the experimental group in Session 1, writing down concrete problems with their children that they wanted to handle more effectively. This assessment is included in the PET Workbook (Cornelius &Jones, 1976). The PCRS presents six situations, two each relating to the three primary skills taught - active listening, confrontation and conflict resolution, using typical situations discussed in the textbook (Gordon, 1975). The questions were designed to assess subjects' acquisition of the three major skills as the course progressed, being administered at each session and at the 16 week follow-up. The parents spontaneously wrote down a response to each situation as it was read out at a regular time each session, at the end of the course and at the 16 week follow-up. No feedback was given at any stage on the responses. The response sheets were randomised and assessed "blind" by a skilled independent rater. The Moos FES and the PAS were administered to the experimental group, together with the PCRS, in the first session before any teaching had begun, again at the end of the course, and at the follow-up.

All the measures were administered to members of the control group in their homes at the beginning of the course, at the end of the course and again 16 weeks later. Times for the control group were approximate as they were all tested separately.

Results showed that the experimental parents were able to analyse a situation to decide whether active listening, confrontation or conflict resolution was called for, and to formulate an appropriate response. In this they were significantly different from the control group. Parents' self-reports indicated satisfactory changes in unacceptable behaviours of children, and some improvement in problems which had not been solved.

No attitudinal changes were shown either on the Moos FES or the PAS. Eastman (1983) has suggested that the FES is not sensitive to change over time. The PAS failed to differentiate the PET and control groups, though there were substantial changes in both from pretest to posttest. This may have reflected demand characteristics. However there was a noteworthy incongruity between the democratic attitudes expressed in PAS responses in both groups at the pretest and the authoritarian parenting styles expressed in the replies to the PCRS at the same time. These responses changed significantly over time in the PET group, but hardly at all in the control group. It was suggested that this reflected attitudinal social change which was not necessarily translated into alternative cognitive or behavioural responses to the immediate demands of childrearing. In the experimental group, parents' comments on specific objectives and perceived changes in family interaction suggested that they were satisfied with the program. The experimenters also noted that the assessment measures most specifically related to the program were the most sensitive indicators of change.

Meta-analysis of PET

Cedar (1985) pointed out that because of the difficulty of making sense out of the large body of accumulated studies of such various methodologies and apparent value, a more powerful method of evaluation was needed than those previously employed. He suggested that meta-analysis (Smith, Glass & Miller, 1980; Glass, McGaw & Smith, 1981) would meet this need. The technique of meta-analysis is essentially one of applying a statistical analysis to a body of research literature on a specific topic, by extracting empirical information, and analysing it in much the same way as if it were a single study. Traditional methods of review face many problems, including the size of the literature, the criteria for inclusion of studies, the varying orientations, populations used, instrumentation,

duration of studies, and the criteria of significance as Anastasi (1981) found in reviewing the literature of sex differences. There is a need to achieve a systematic integration of the original data from the studies included and to find a means of empirical investigation of all research, both published and unpublished (Light & Smith, 1971). Meta-analysis results in the production of a single set of numbers with which to make a reliable assessment of the entire body of research. The key to aggregation of the findings is the effect size statistic (ES), which is a standardised mean difference score, "essentially the same as a Z score and interpreted similarly if a normal distribution is assumed". (Cedar, 1985, p. 62).

Cedar used the following criteria for inclusion of studies in the meta-analysis: (a) use of a control group (b) use of pretest and posttest (c) use of quantitative measures and inferential statistics. Analogue studies (non-parents) were not included.

From 60 studies found, Cedar was able to use 26 including the three which met the strict criteria of Levant (1983a), plus four considered of superior design by Cedar (1985); they also included 12 of the less satisfactory studies described by Levant (1983a), and 11 of those reviewed in a similar light by Dembo et al. (1985). (Eight were included by both Levant and Dembo et al.) It was shown to be important to include both published and unpublished studies in the meta-analysis technique. Cedar considered that this study represented the most comprehensive search to date for PET studies. In the meta-analysis a series of one-way and two-way analyses of variance were performed to assess the relationship between the independent variables and effect size. The research questions were: (a) the overall effect of PET (b) substantiation of Gordon's claims (c) the relationship between methodology and the magnitude of effect (d) PET's effect on specific populations (e) the impact of certain treatment variables (f) the long-term effect of PET.

The many analyses provided the following answers:

1. PET had an overall effect size of 0.33 units. This was significantly greater than the effect size for a group representing alternative treatments ($p<.009$). It was equivalent to moving in parenting skills "from the 50 percentile to the 63 percentile on a normal bell curve" (Cedar, 1985, p. 237).

2. Most of Gordon's claims were supported (with some qualifications). PET appeared to have an effect on parent attitudes and behaviour, although no effects showed up in the children, possibly because of the comparatively short length of time of the course.

3. Another result shown was that the better-designed studies had significantly greater effect sizes than those less well designed. However, it was shown to be important to include studies which had not been published as well as those which had.

4. Questions relating to specific populations could not be answered, as the data did not lend itself well to this type of analysis.

5. The variables (other than course content) which could have an impact on the outcome of PET included the setting of the training, the experience of the leader, and the number of hours of training. They also included the cost of the course, and the ages of the children in a given study. Although the results on these variables should be treated with caution, it was shown that the place where the course is held does have an impact on the outcome. Schools achieved a higher effect size (0.43) than either churches (0.13) or clinics (0.14). This was interpreted as confirmation that the program is seen as educational, rather than religious or clinical. There was not enough data to achieve a meaningful result on the question of leader training,

but Cedar voiced the opinion that the training and experience of the leader would have a crucial effect on the outcome. Only two studies in the analysis reported other than standard hours of training, so it was not possible to make a finding on this variable. There was no significant difference in the effect sizes for courses where there were fees as compared with those that were free, but a large number of studies did not report whether or not fees were charged. The last variable concerns the age range of the children whose parents are in the PET group. It was found that in groups where the children's age range was greater than 3 years the effect size of the studies was less than it was for groups where the range in ages was less than 3, but the difference was not significant. Presumably parents with similar age children have more in common with each other, and this has an effect on the group.

6. Experimental evidence showed that the effects of PET endured up to 26 weeks after the course.

Results from the meta-analysis are encouraging. Cedar noted that "these results answer the question which to date has not been able to be answered by the other literature reviews (Rinn & Markle, 1977; Levant, 1983a) : PET does have a positive effect" (Cedar, 1985, p. 237). The program appeared to have enhanced both the attitudes and behaviour of parents, and on the whole, claims for the efficacy of PET (Gordon, 1977b, 1980) were substantiated.

Rationale for the Present Study

Behavioural measures of PET outcomes have been urged for many years (Rinn & Markle, 1977; Mitchell & McManis, 1977; Hughson, 1980; Schultz, 1981). It is difficult to devise dependent variable measures to show more than attitudinal change (Curran, 1979), and PET studies have not generally assessed behavioural outcomes for parents. However, in the early studies (Zener, 1979)

there appear to be five which reported children's behaviour changes as a result of parents' PET participation: Miles (1974); Aunkst-Dewald, (1976); Eckerle, (1976); Church, (1979), and Gianotti (1979). Miles (1974) reported that PET had been effective in reducing inappropriate classroom behaviour in potential dropouts, as rated by teachers using the Teachers' Behavior Rating Scale. However the validity of this result is disputed (Rinn & Markle, 1977) chiefly on the grounds that incorrect inferences were drawn, and there was a possibility of rater bias. Aunkst-Dewald (1976) in a study of PET with volunteer Girl Scout leaders, found that their children showed a notable decrease in negative behaviour on the Rose Behavior Monitoring scale. Eckerle (1976) reported a reduction in children's delinquent behaviour, following their own participation in a PET course, and Church (1979) concluded that parental participation in PET resulted in a lessening of children's aggressive acting-out behaviour. No other details are noted by Zener (1981). Giannotti (1979) found that children of PET participants improved significantly on several scales of the Devereux Elementary School Behavior Rating Scale, as noted by their teachers.

It will be seen that all these studies have assessed behaviour in terms of existing instruments, or by quantification (Eckerle, 1976). Apparently, none of the studies has been directed specifically towards behaviour change in terms of PET skills, and the only studies of PET to use specifically-behavioural outcome measures are Schultz and Nystul (1980) and Schultz and Khan (1982).

It was proposed in the present study to attempt a behavioural measure in the form of a three-minute video-recorded role-play of a standardised conflict interaction between parent and adolescent. The situation used was a modified version of "Going to Grandma's", (see Appendix A), an optional role-play in PET (Zener & Kieschnick, 1981) which was not used in the experimental course. The

concept of using a structured role-play to demonstrate a style of dyadic interaction in a family context has been shown to be useful in identifying the presence or absence of particular skills (Blakar, 1984). It was hoped that measures of a longer interaction would demonstrate the presence or absence of skills specific to PET, and that inclusion of teenagers in the mother-child dyads would be a further extension of the research.

CHAPTER 3

THE CURRENT STUDY

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Method

Subjects.

The experimental group consisted of 13 Parent/Teenager pairs. The parents were all enrolled in one or other of two PET courses run at the University of Tasmania, and their teenagers were enrolled in a Youth Effectiveness Training (YET) course run simultaneously in an adjoining room on the same night. There were six dyads in the first group, and seven dyads in the second group. Ten other parents participated over the two courses, but without accompanying teenagers. There were two qualified instructors, one for PET and one for YET. The PET instructor had taught 24 PET courses over seven years, and the YET instructor had taught two previous courses.

In the total experimental group, four mothers were accompanied by daughters, and six by sons. There were three fathers, two with daughters and one with a son. Five unaccompanied mothers participated and five fathers.

The participants were obtained through responses to notices about the course, placed in newsletters of secondary schools in Hobart. Ages of parents ranged from 39 to 53, and of children from 13 to 16. There were also five unaccompanied teenagers in the YET course. There were four couples among the parents. No charge was made for the experimental course.

The control group consisted of 11 parent/teenager dyads not participating in the course. They were matched as nearly as possible in ages and background. It had been hoped that a wait-list control could be organised at the preliminary meeting before the beginning of the course, but no parents were willing to undergo the uncertainty of being randomly allocated to experimental group or wait-list.

Dependent Variable Measures

PET/YET Visual Analog Scales (VAS). It had been decided that the chief aim of the study was to achieve a behavioural measure of the outcome of the PET course. Accordingly, Visual Analog Scales were constructed to measure a videoed conflict interaction between each dyad. Skills to be assessed were those of confrontation, listening and conflict resolution. Success in the latter, according to the PET model, is dependent on the acquisition of the first two. A form was devised, with three bi-polar visual analog scales, to measure respectively Appropriate Assertiveness, Listening and Conflict Resolution, for both parent and child. There were short explanatory notes at each pole so that the raters could score the interactions with a minimum of difficulty. (See Appendix B).

Hereford Parent Attitude Survey (Hereford, 1963). This scale includes 77 items, with five dimensions using 15 items each and 2 buffer items. The five dimensions are Confidence, Causation, Acceptance, Understanding and Trust. The items are relevant to the stated aims of the PET course (Gordon, 1975) and are claimed (Hereford, 1963) to be important in parent-child relationships, measurable and responsive to change by education.

Validity of the scale was assessed (Hereford, 1963) by first submitting 200 items to a panel of judges who each divided them into the 5 designated categories. The items which received 100% agreement were then tested on a group of 72

parents. The final version of each subscale was made up of the 15 items with the highest correlation coefficients between item score and total score.

Split-half reliability scores ranging from .68 to .86 were reported (Hereford, 1963) Mean reliability over the 5 scales was .80, and interscale correlations ranged from .33 to .63.

The Hereford PAS has been used in a large number of PET studies, including some with Australian populations. As noted above, Hughson (1980) reported significant improvement on 3 of the 5 scales (Acceptance, Understanding and Trust) for two experimental groups in comparison with a control group.

Rob and Norfor (1980) found that PET parents who initially showed higher pre-course scores than the population of the region on all 5 dimensions of the PAS, also improved significantly on the dimensions of Confidence, Causation and Trust by the end of the course.

Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967). Self-esteem is an important concern in PET, both in theory and in practice. Numerous examples are given of ways of communicating with children which avoid reducing their self-esteem (Gordon, 1975).

The SEI is designed to measure evaluative attitudes towards the self in social, academic, family and personal areas of experience. It was developed in conjunction with an extensive study of self-esteem in children (Coopersmith, 1967). Studies using SEI scores as a criterion for evaluating programs have been reported (Crawford & Miskel, 1977; McMillan, 1978).

Reliability. Spatz and Johnston (1973) administered the SEI to more than 600 students in Grades 5, 9, and 12 in a rural school district. One hundred Inventories

were selected from each grade and Kuder-Richardson reliability estimates were calculated. Obtained coefficients were .81 for Grade 5, and .86 for Grade 9.

Validity. A study of SEI construct validity was reported by Kokenes (1974, 1978). Subjects were over 7600 school children in Grades 4 to 8. The study investigated the comparative importance of home, peers and school to to the global self-esteem of preadolescents and adolescents. The construct validity of the subscales proposed by Coopersmith as measuring self-esteem was confirmed.

In the present study the Adult form of the SEI was to be administered to the parents, and the School form to the teenagers.

PET/YET Visual Analog Scale. Visual analog scales have been used extensively in a variety of research and clinical settings since the 1920s (McCormack, Horne & Sheather, 1988). They are quick and easy to administer and score, sensitive, and suitable for the measurement of change. They can be constructed to measure specific outcomes, and can measure any number of items. The PET/YET visual analog scales were carefully constructed as three bi-polar measures: Appropriate Assertiveness (Confrontation), Active Listening and Conflict Resolution. Appropriate short behavioural descriptions were printed at each pole. Measures for both parent and child were on the same form. (See Appendix B).

Course Objectives. The "Setting Objectives" page in the Workbook (Gordon, 1976) was to be filled in by parents in Session 1. Bellack (1979) in relation to social skills training suggests that before training an assessment should be made of the situations where improvement is needed, and the source of the dysfunction. During training, assessment procedures can include self-report, self-monitoring, ratings by peers, and behavioural observations. Social perception and cognitive factors are important and include the knowledge of where and when to make specific responses as well as how to make them. These procedures are equally

relevant to parent training, and in fact most of them are built in to the PET course. Parents make an assessment of the problems they want to handle differently in the Setting Objectives section of the Workbook, and as the course proceeds, they learn experientially how different responses work, and which ones are effective for them. They then proceed to learn to use these in actual practice, first in class, and then by trying them out at home. At-home experiences are discussed in the following session. Following the end of the course, the parents were asked to report on the attainment of their objectives, and to rate them Achieved (A), Partly Achieved (PA), Not Achieved (NA), Worse (W), or Changed My View (CV) for cases in which the parent had changed her attitude to the problem as a result of the course. Facsimiles of the Setting Objectives page were provided for the purpose.

Children were given an open-ended form to evaluate the course at the end of YET.

Statistical Procedure

With multiple measures there is an associated problem of a possible increase in Type I errors (Keppel, 1982); in the present study there are 3 behavioural measures, 10 questionnaire measures and two groups. If no correction is made and the 5% level of significance is used, one or two significant differences may be expected by chance alone. On the other hand, to treat all 26 tests as the outcome of a single experiment and use a global Bonferroni adjustment to the significance level may easily mask real effects.

First, the numbers are not large, and so differences produced by the treatments must be relatively large to be detected. Second, the courses are different for parents and children, so the outcomes are not necessarily the same for both groups. Third, there are frequently very low correlations between behavioural ratings and subjective assessment using questionnaires. For example,

discrepancies between response systems have been noted in assertiveness training studies, when changes on targetted motoric responses have been observed, but self-reports on assertiveness questionnaires have not changed significantly on a pre-post basis (Hersen, Eisler & Miller, 1973).

In view of these considerations, it was decided to treat the analyses of parents and children separately, and behavioural and questionnaire data separately, giving four different families of analyses. In each family, an overall significance level of .05 was applied. After adjustment for three behavioural measures and 10 questionnaire measures, the actual significance levels used were .0167 for behavioural ratings, and .005 for questionnaire measures. Differences which reach this level in the present study will be treated as significant. Differences which achieve significance only at the .05 level will be noted as possible trends. This approach is consistent with that of Hall and Bird (1985) to test the hypotheses for multiple dependent variables which are not used in combinations.

Because of possible problems with violation of assumptions in applying analyses of covariance to data of the present kind, it was decided that improvement would be assessed by analysis of gain scores (Maxwell & Delaney, 1990).

Specific Hypotheses

1. Following the PET program there will be enhanced skills in the three major areas of Active Listening, Confrontation and Conflict Resolution in the PET group as compared to the control group.

2. Following the YET program there will be enhanced skills in the three major areas of Active Listening, Confrontation and Conflict Resolution in the YET group as compared to the control group.

3. There will be increased mean scores on the Hereford PAS, on the SEI, and on the FIRO-B scales for the PET and YET groups compared to controls at the posttest.

Procedure

Materials The PET course was taught in a standard 8-week format, with one session per week, using the textbook (Gordon, 1975), Workbook, (Gordon, 1976), blackboard presentations, charts and tapes. YET was taught at the same time, with charts, blackboard and worksheets. As YET is intended to take ten weeks, the teen-age group continued with an all-day session on the Saturday after the PET course finished.

The behavioural conflict interactions were videorecorded one week before the course began, prior to any discussion, teaching, or issue of materials, and again following the end of the course. Three assistants conducted the roleplay and videotape recording . One assistant gave standardised instructions (see Appendix C) to each parent and child in separate locations, and they were then escorted to the camera room which was set up in the Psychology Department. Care was taken by the assistants to maintain an easy atmosphere and establish rapport without fuss. The camera was mounted on a shelf in the corner opposite two chairs and a coffee table, and a microphone was set up between the chairs. The video recorder and VDU were on a stand facing away from the subjects, but within their view. One assistant gave the instruction to begin and to continue until the timer bell rang, while the other operated the camera. A short debriefing was undertaken with each pair by the assistants. Following the videotaping the subjects returned to the original room where the three standard questionnaires were administered. The control group

subjects went through the same procedures, with similar intervals between pretest and posttest as far as possible.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The videos of all the interactions were put in random order using a table of random numbers (McCall, 1980). They were then copied onto a single videotape in that order, so that the raters would be "blind" to which interactions were pretest, posttest, experimental or control group. Three skilled independent raters were trained with videos not used in the study (pretests of two experimental and two control dyads who withdrew). The raters scored the videotape using the PET/YET Visual Analog Scales constructed by the experimenter in order to measure the three skills of Active Listening, Confrontation and Conflict Resolution.

Reliabilities between the raters were assessed with correlation matrices for the 48 interactions on the randomised tape, and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Reliability Coefficients between 3 raters for the 3 behavioural ratings of parents and children interacting (n = 48, pretest and posttest combined).

		Rater 1 and 2	*Rater 1 and 3*	*Rater 2 and 3*
Parents	Lis	.79	.74	.73
	Confr	.68	.58	.64
	C Res	.82	.76	.82
Children	Lis	.56	.66	.62
	Confr	.27	.30	.56
	C Res	.74	.70	.82

Note. Lis = Active Listening; Confr = Confrontation; C Res = Conflict Resolution.

These reliabilities are generally quite satisfactory for the assessment of group differences, with the possible exception of ratings of children for Confrontation, which are low to moderate.

The scores of the three raters were averaged and a mean improvement score was calculated for parents and children on each of the measures. Improvement scores were then subjected to t-tests. The results for Parents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for the scores of parents in the experimental group (n=13) and the control group (n=11) on the three behavioural measures from the videotaped interactions, and t-tests for the difference in improvement between the groups

Scale	Group	Pretest		Posttest		Improvement		t(22)	p
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Lis	Exp	-4.92	4.13	1.67	4.15	6.59	4.75	2.54	.0187
	Control	-1.70	4.83	-0.18	4.97	1.51	5.03		
Confr	Exp	-5.46	3.90	0.62	4.03	6.08	5.07	3.29	.0033
	Control	-2.48	4.24	-2.55	4.20	-0.06	3.83		
C Res	Exp	-4.44	4.78	3.67	3.05	8.10	4.12	2.99	.0066
	Control	-2.85	5.48	-0.39	6.89	2.45	5.11		

Note. Lis = Active Listening; Confr = Confrontation; C Res = Conflict Resolution.

It can be seen that there is a considerable mean Improvement difference between the groups on the three skills, with the differences in Confrontation and Conflict Resolution significant at the Bonferroni adjusted .0167 level. There is a strong trend for improvement in Active Listening. These results provide support for the first experimental prediction, i.e. , that there will be enhancement of skills in the areas of Active Listening, Confrontation and Conflict Resolution in the PET group as compared with the Control Group.

As a control to check for comparability of groups, differences between experimental and control groups of parents and children were assessed for the pretest means, but none of the differences was statistically significant. The values are shown in Appendices A and B.

The scores for Children on behavioural measures are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for the scores of children in the experimental group (n=13) and the control group (n = 11) on the three behavioural measures from the videotaped interactions, and t-tests for the difference in improvement between groups

Scale	*Group*	*Pretest*		*Posttest*		*Improvement*		*t(22)*	***p***
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Lis	Exp	-2.46	3.98	1.41	3.32	3.87	3.24	1.58	.1277
	Control	-0.73	4.26	0.58	4.07	1.30	4.67		
Confr	Exp	-1.82	3.71	0.72	3.29	2.54	3.58	1.47	.1553
	Control	0.06	4.08	0.36	3.57	0.30	3.86		
C Res	Exp	-3.33	4.57	3.56	2.90	6.90	3.90	3.35	.0029
	Control	0.82	4.85	1.64	6.35	0.81	4.98		

Note. Lis = Active Listening; Confr = Confrontation; C Res = Conflict Resolution.

Results for Children showed a highly significant difference between the groups on Conflict Resolution. However, on both Active Listening and Confrontation the difference in improvement between the groups was not significant. Checks on initial group differences showed no significant differences between experimental and control children on Active Listening or Confrontation, but a marginally significant difference favouring the control group on the pretest means. (Conflict Resolution : $t(22) = 2.16$, $p < .042$). There was almost no change in the control group from pretest to posttest, but after the intervention, the average performance of the YET group was superior.

Results for Parents on the questionnaire measures show very little change. The Hereford PAS demonstrates no global difference between the groups, but on the Subscale PAS-C there was a trend towards greater confidence on the part of Parents who had taken PET.

Results from the SEI for Parents show no significant change.

On the FIRO-B, there is a trend for decreased Inclusion by the experimental group as compared with the control group, but the other results show no changes.

Results for Parents on the questionnaire measures are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for the Scores of Parents in the Experimental Group (n = 13) and the Control Group (n = 11) on the Questionnaire Measures, and t- Tests for the Difference in Improvement Between the Groups

Scale	*Group*	*Pretest*		*Posttest*		*Improvement*		*(22)*	*p*
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
PAS	Exp	68.54	24.15	80.54	20.00	12.00	19.87	0.74	.4697
	Control	73.45	23.82	78.36	17.59	4.91	27.28		
Pas-C	Exp	5.85	4.76	8.54	3.71	2.70	3.90	2.19	.0395
	Control	9.00	6.59	7.82	4.85	-1.18	4.77		
Pas-Ca	Exp	13.77	7.33	16.23	5.79	2.46	4.65	0.30	.7641
	Control	14.36	6.19	16.09	6.25	1.73	7.11		
Pas-A	Exp	13.77	7.73	15.38	5.63	1.62	7.07	0.46	.6479
	Control	15.64	5.20	16.09	4.64	0.45	4.74		
Pas-U	Exp	18.08	6.25	19.92	4.94	1.85	5.21	0.31	.7588
	Control	18.00	4.49	19.27	4.15	1.27	3.47		
Pas-T	Exp	17.08	4.72	20.46	4.99	3.38	4.03	0.24	.8094
	Control	16.45	8.20	19.09	4.70	2.64	10.18		
SEI	Exp	74.15	16.38	75.08	15.42	0.92	8.82	-1.76	.0923
	Control	76.27	12.36	85.00	7.89	8.73	12.82		
F-B I	Exp	4.15	2.15	3.15	1.77	-1.00	1.22	-2.10	.0475
	Control	4.00	2.24	4.27	2.32	0.27	1.74		
F-B C	Exp	1.85	1.46	1.77	1.17	-0.08	1.80	-1.55	.1344
	Control	1.82	1.94	2.82	1.83	1.00	1.55		
F-B A	Exp	3.08	1.90	3.00	1.22	-0.08	1.04	-0.62	.5394
	Control	3.27	2.05	3.64	2.29	0.36	2.29		

Note. PAS = Hereford Parent Attitude Survey; Pas-C = Hereford PAS Subscale Confidence; PAS-Ca = Hereford PAS Subscale Causation; PAS-A = Hereford PAS

Subscale Acceptance; PAS-U = Hereford PAS Subscale Understanding; PAS-T = Hereford PAS Subscale Trust; SEI = Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory; F-B I = FIRO-B Inclusion Subscale; F-B C = FIRO-B Control Subscale; F-B A = FIRO-B Affection Subscale.

Results for children on the questionnaire measures are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for the Scores of Children in the Experimental Group (n =13) and the Control Group (n =11) on the Questionnaire Measures, and t- Tests for the Difference in Improvement Between the Groups

Scale	*Group*	*Pretest*		*Posttest*		*Improvement*		*t (22)*	*p*
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
PAS	Exp	50.92	19.44	61.85	21.33	10.92	28.03	0.53	.6016
	Control	52.64	13.60	58.73	20.47	6.09	12.19		
Pas-C	Exp	1.77	5.55	4.77	4.70	3.00	4.32	1.09	.2878
	Control	0.82	4.21	1.73	5.18	0.91	5.09		
Pas-Ca	Exp	8.38	6.69	13.00	6.95	4.62	8.95	0.33	.7419
	Control	10.18	5.86	13.82	5.12	3.64	4.11		
Pas-A	Exp	7.46	5.36	8.00	6.62	0.54	7.38	-0.38	.7044
	Control	7.64	5.57	9.18	6.05	1.55	4.97		
Pas-U	Exp	16.00	4.20	16.77	6.37	0.77	7.21	0.34	.7347
	Control	18.73	3.47	18.64	4.39	-0.09	4.46		
Pas-T	Exp	17.31	6.58	19.31	4.89	2.00	8.34	0.63	.5377
	Control	15.27	5.70	15.36	6.48	0.09	6.20		
SEI	Exp	72.46	9.87	74.46	8.05	2.00	9.09	0.22	.8204
	Control	71.81	14.30	72.73	17.60	0.91	14.01		
F-B I	Exp	5.85	1.52	5.70	1.80	-0.15	1.34	0.36	.7214
	Control	6.73	1.90	6.36	2.16	-0.36	1.50		
F-B C	Exp	2.46	2.02	3.31	2.78	0.84	1.91	1.62	.1193
	Control	3.27	2.72	2.82	1.72	-0.45	2.02		
F-B A	Exp	4.46	2.44	4.00	2.31	-0.46	2.79	-0.17	.8630
	Control	5.09	2.55	4.82	2.23	-0.27	2.45		

Note. PAS = Hereford Parent Attitude Survey; Pas-C = Hereford PAS Subscale Confidence,; PAS-Ca = Hereford PAS Subscale Causation; Pas-A = Hereford PAS Subscale Acceptance; Pas-U = Hereford PAS Subscale Understanding; Pas-T = Hereford PAS Subscale Trust; SEI = Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory; F-B I = FIRO-B Inclusion Subscale; F-B C = FIRO-B Control Subscale; F-B A = FIRO-B Affection Subscale.

The results for children on the questionnaire measures showed no significant changes.

Qualitative measures The parents' "Setting Objectives" worksheets were categorised and quantified. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Parents' Ratings of Their Own Stated Objectives for the PET Course

Parent	*No. of aims*	*A*	*PA*	*NA*	*W*	*CV*
1	5	3		1		1
2	5		5			
3	4	2	2			
4	5		5			
5	5	2	3			
6	4		3	1		
7	5		1	1		3
8	5		4			1
9	4		1	3		
10	4		3	1		
11	5		5			
12	5	1	4			
13	5		4	1		

Note. A = Achieved; PA = Partly Achieved; NA = Not Achieved; W = Worse; CV = Changed my View.

It can be seen that of 61 stated objectives, eight were achieved and 40 partly sachieved. Eight were not achieved, and there were five cases where the parent had decided that the previous objective was no longer appropriate or desirable. No problems were designated as worse.

Aims that were achieved included less arguing with daughter, less tension before school in the mornings, ability to use listening skills when there are undisclosed difficulties, success in getting parent's point of view across to child (using "I-messages"), handling crises more constructively, enjoying the relationship with a child, and better and more consistent home routine. Not achieved by some parents were spontaneous contribution to chores, less time in the shower and less water on the floor, defensiveness on the part of the child when reprimanded, less aggression between the other family members, a tidy room, more acceptance of tasks that are disliked like homework, and putting things away. However other parents included some of these among the aims partly achieved.

Parents' partial achievements also included more tolerance of children's shortcomings, reduced conflict because the parent was more accepting, fewer reminders needed because children were more responsible, more self-control on the part of the parent, better relationship between father and son, less need for the parent to win, ability to decide who owns the problem and act accordingly, less anger, much better at handling conflict, children better at getting on with homework and chores without fuss, and less TV watching on the part of children. Changed views of parents resulted in less worry about where children were because of open discussion, acceptance of a child's need to have her own hairstyle, less tension because the parent was willing to request that tasks be done instead of expecting spontaneous help, acceptance of a child's fondness for raggedy toys and possessions, and allowing a child to be himself instead of the parent's ideal. One

participant commented that her husband was treating their son with "more respect, and valuing his opinions more". Another reported that "we are all getting better at problem solving and therefore lessening the power game".

Parents also indicated they would keep trying, they were overcoming a problem, they were better able to assess situations ("although not yet an automatic response"), and they now had some strategies to deal with conflict. These self-reports suggest that the parents in the PET course did in fact change both attitudes and behaviour, that some helpful change had already occurred, but that realistically they were aware that they had to continue to improve their skills to achieve their objectives.

Children were given an open-ended evaluation form to fill in after the end of the course. Different reports indicated that they understood their own and others' feelings better, that they got on better with their parents, they argued less, they got on better with their father, they were closer to their mother, they didn't get upset so easily and could resolve conflicts better and sooner. One girl said she realised she wasn't a good listener, and that she was always interrupting people. Now she was trying to be different . A boy said he was happier because he could talk about things and listen to his parents' point of view. While he was no longer willing to be pushed around, he could now accept himself and his own needs and his parents' needs as well. Another was more conscious of other peoples' opinions and values, and realised he could think of many different ways to solve problems.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

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Skills Acquisition

The present study strongly supported the parent group's acquisition of the skills of conflict resolution and appropriate confrontation. At the end of the PET course they had improved significantly more on these measures than the control group parents. On listening skills they had improved much more than the control group, but the difference was not great enough to be statistically significant at the modified Bonferroni level. The first hypothesis was thus substantially supported.

The 13 adolescent children showed significant improvement in their handling of a conflict situation after taking YET, as compared with the control group. There was somewhat greater improvement in both listening and confrontation skills in the experimental group than there was in the control group, but the differences were not large enough to be regarded as statistically significant. The second experimental hypothesis therefore received partial support.

In summary, there is evidence from the behavioural data that both parents and children acquired enhanced abilities to deal with conflict, following the PET and YET courses. The parents' acquisition of appropriate confrontation, which, in PET terms, means confrontation which motivates the other to freely change rather than resist and be defensive, was very satisfactory. Empathic listening was obviously more difficult. While apparently simple, it is very hard to acquire in the

present culture, which is oriented more to countering, debate and the adversary system. Moreover, the most common helping attempts of well-intentioned parents in fact involve quite other responses, as is demonstrated in vivo in the first session of PET.

The experimental group children improved in conflict resolution, and in active listening and confrontation significantly more than the control group, although the mean differences were not nearly as great as those of the parents. There may be several reasons for this: (a) YET is less intensive than PET. There are no written exercises, and children may not be as aware as parents of the consequences of particular verbal exchanges. (b) Parents had experienced difficulties and had been motivated to come to PET. (c) Children had agreed to take the course, but were not the prime motivators.

The experimental evidence does not relate to the use of the skills at home, but the self-reports indicate that this was occurring. Doubts have been raised as to whether eight weeks is a sufficient time to assimilate complex interpersonal behaviours such as those put forward in PET (Hughson, 1980), but such an outcome has not been claimed. Gordon (1980) pointed out that the PET course provided parents with the skills to begin a process. As with any skill, proficiency depends on continual practice. Continued adoption of the skills is a choice which remains with the parents.

Standardised Questionnaire Measures

The third hypothesis related to the standard questionnaire measures. If the results of parents and children are put together, 9 of the 10 differences on the Hereford PAS favoured the experimental group, but none were large enough to achieve statistical significance.

The results from the SEI and the FIRO-B were quite mixed, and again none were statistically significant. Thus the third hypothesis, relating to the PAS (Hereford, 1963), the SEI (Coopersmith, 1967) and the FIRO-B (Schutz, 1967) was not supported.

The Hereford PAS (1963) had been chosen because a large number of PET studies had used it previously (Zener, 1981; Levant, 1983a). Hughson (1980) in an Australian study, reported parental improvement on three of the scales- Acceptance, Understanding and Trust, which she pointed out related particularly well to the aims of PET. In the present study, the largest change, whilst not significant, was a trend on the part of the experimental parents towards increased Confidence. Hughson (1980) related development of parental confidence in the PET course to opportunities for sharing difficulties and plenty of time for group discussion.

The children were given the PAS to complete to investigate their awareness of the family issues of concern to their parents and to see if their attitudes changed as a result of YET. On four of the five subscales, the experimental children improved more than the control children but none of the differences was statistically significant.

Results on the SEI (Coopersmith, 1967) are difficult to interpret. The control parents improved very much more on the posttest than did the experimental parents. Attitudinal changes resulting from PET training, if any, appear to be either too small or too specific to be demonstrated by the questionnaire measures in the present study. Eastman (1983) suggested that the measurement and evaluation process can itself interfere with the results, and reports as an example that, of four groups in a study by White, Kaban and Attanucci (1979), the no-treatment control group scored higher than the treatment groups on the desired changes. A possible

reason for the result on the SEI in the present study could be that while the control group had only the quesionnaires to complete, the experimental parents filled in the questionnaire measures following the videoed interaction, and may have been affected by their performance. Again, the SEI may be too general a measure of self-concept to correlate with the PET behavioural measures. Anastasi (1988) points out that the use of a single instrument to measure self-concept may yield inconsistent results or may even fail to show significant correlations with other variables. A multi-dimensional measure is preferable. Finally, a caution has been raised in relation to use of the SEI with schoolchildren in Australia (Center & Ward, 1986), suggesting that its subscales were less internally consistent than those of the Sears Self-Concept Inventory, and less stable over time.

It had been hoped that the FIRO-B would have shown changes comparable to those of the behavioural measures. Bloxom (1972) considered that its subscales were sufficiently related to interpersonal behaviour and measures of personality to make it worthwhile in research, although not in guidance and counselling. Floyd (1988) concluded that the validity of the FIRO-B was supported by her study of college students who differed both in values and life experience from those with whom Schutz (1967) developed the scales.

The FIRO-B uses six scales of behaviour towards others: inclusion, expressed and wanted; control, expressed and wanted; and affection, expressed and wanted. Bloxom (1972) suggests that the correlations among the subscales are such that expressed and wanted inclusion and expressed and wanted affection in fact are assessing the same needs - the need for inclusion and the need for affection, and moreover that they have a slight positive relationship. Control does not appear to be in the same category. Lifton (1985) describes FIRO-B expressed Control as the extent to which a person assumes responsibility or dominates people, and

wanted Control according to Schutz (1967) is equated with wanting to be controlled. For the purpose of the current study, the expressed dimension of each subscale only was used. The results were very mixed and difficult to interpret. There were no significant differences between the groups, and only a very slight trend to be noted, that of the experimental parents towards less inclusion, which was puzzling.

These results underline the need for measures which are specifically designed to assess particular outcomes. While there has been a call for the use of standard measures (Rinn & Markle, 1977; Levant, 1983a), there is a real problem that this can encourage the choice of a goal "on the basis of its measurability rather than its significance in the program" (Eastman, 1983, p. 35). It is further pointed out that many of the standardised tests and measuring instruments currently used can be very crude measures of family environment or interaction, and that too few instruments have been developed in the area (Eastman, 1983). Certainly, the measure (M-CIM) developed by Schultz and Nystul (1980) and used also by Schultz and Khan (1982) successfully discriminated change in PET mothers on short-term behavioural variables, and pointed the way "towards more objective measurement strategies" (Levant, 1983a, p. 42). The Parent-Child Response Sheet (PCRS) developed for the purpose, was shown to be the most sensitive measure of the PET outcome variables tested by Wood and Davidson (1987). In the current study the Visual Analog Scales picked up the behavioural changes which had occurred in the experimental group but had not occurred in the control group.

Behavioural Measures

Some considerations remain to be raised in relation to the behavioural measures in the present study. General questions include queries as to whether reactivity to observers threatens the validity of a behavioural study, or whether

knowledge of the purpose of the experiment can influence observers (Lipinski & Nelson, 1974; Bellack, 1979; Haynes & Horn, 1982). In any study there is the possibility that observer bias can affect the raters. Complete randomisation of the interactions was intended to deal with both respondent and serial effects in this situation. Demand characteristics can also influence outcomes (Orne, 1962). As far as possible attention was paid to these possibilities. Technical assistants handled the videorecording to separate out any experimenter effect. Time was spent in making sure that parents and children were comfortable and at home in the video room, and the technical apparatus, while not hidden was minimised. The video screen was turned away from participants. The assistant giving instructions was careful to make sure that participants understood what was required and were reasonably happy about it.

Two points need to be made. Firstly, because the study concerned the acquisition of specific skills, the nature of which participants were unaware at the time of the pretest, it is unlikely that demand characteristics could influence them. Secondly, at the time of the posttest, participants understood what the skills were, but it is nevertheless impossible to fake a skill. Because the video interactions could be replayed, the raters were able to check any one about which they were doubtful. A complete transcript was also made from the videos so that any statements made by the participants could be checked.

Technical questions relate to whether the role-play is equivalent to a real-life situation, or whether role-plays can be too brief or too anxiety inducing to elicit response skills (Bellack, 1979). Again, because the emphasis is on skills acquisition, not on when and where they are used, the first question is largely irrelevant. The second question was addressed in the choice of a three-minute unscripted role-play of a specific (and familiar) situation. Most concerns as to

brevity have been raised in single response situations. The fact that the skills were convincingly demonstrated at a level significantly beyond that of pure chance should vindicate the choice of this particular role-play.

The main aim of the present study was the attempt to extend the measurement of participants' behaviour as an outcome of PET and YET. Schultz and Nystul (1980) and Schultz and Khan (1982) on videotape, had measured short-term behavioural variables, and it was hoped that by videorecording the skills in action a measure even more directly related to PET might be achieved. These variables were generally assessed with satisfactory reliabilities, except for Confrontation in relation to children, and with group data, low to moderate reliabilities can be quite satisfactory in showing differences between the groups.

General Discussion

The emphasis in the present study has been on the attempt to demonstrate skills acquisition. It has been shown that parent-child dyads can successfully change habitual patterns of interaction using skills that can be spontaneously applied. It is, therefore, possible for the participants to continue in the PET mode as part of a life-process of change, as healthy adaptation and socioemotional development throughout the life cycle. These are important dimensions of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), and are more important than a static outcome. It would be fruitful to investigate long-term behavioural outcomes of PET, perhaps with PET families as suggested by Gordon (1985). More investigation is needed also into the effects of training one or two persons in the family. Eastman (1983) suggested that two trainees produce better results than one, and Stanley (1978) found that families in which parents and adolescents were trained together showed greater improvement in family decision making than those in which parents alone were trained. However, Doherty and Ryder (1980) pointed out that training one

parent and not the other could be a source of discord within the family. Levant (1983a, p. 20) noted that "most programs focus only on one subsystem of the family, (usually a dyad) and do not take into account the potential consequences of such an intervention on other subsystems or the family as a whole". The same concern was expressed by Davies (1978) and Gordon (1975) was aware of the problem. The trained parent possesses skills which can be used to ameliorate the situation, but it certainly needs investigation. More data is needed, and a long-term study is indicated. A further important goal is extension of the use of behavioural variables.

Conclusion

The world has changed radically since the 1960s. One investigator has gone so far as to suggest that the natural-social sequence of family life has been destroyed (Fletcher, 1988) with changes in family patterns, in schooling patterns, in social welfare, and with the invasion of the family home by television. A reassessment of parenting practices is clearly needed, and the present study has shown that a group of parents and teenagers have been able to change their interactive style in a positive way and to their mutual satisfaction.

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Appendix A: Instructions to Parents and Teenagers for Conflict Interaction.

PARENT INSTRUCTIONS.

These are your instructions. Next Saturday is Grandma's birthday. You really want your teenager to go with you in the afternoon to Grandma's. You feel it is a special family occasion. You will have to explain the situation, making sure he/she understands how important it is.

Begin when you are told. A bell will ring at the end of 3 minutes, and you finish off then.

TEEN INSTRUCTIONS.

These are your instructions. Next Saturday is your Grandma's birthday. Your mother/father really wants you to go in the afternoon to Grandma's. Your parent will explain the situation to you. You really can't go because you already have made a firm arrangement to play sport / have a play rehearsal* with your schoolmates and you can't let them down. A bell will ring at the end of 3 minutes and you finish off then.

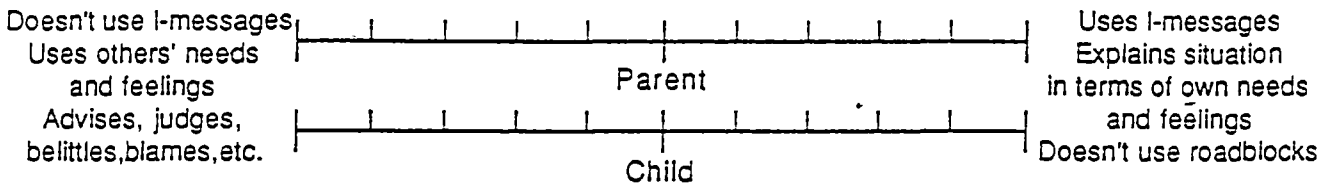
*(to suit the teenager)

PAIR NO. [ ]

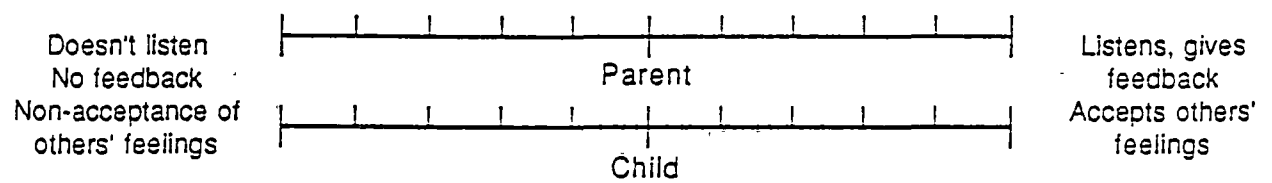
Appendix B:

PET/YET VISUAL ANALOG SCALES

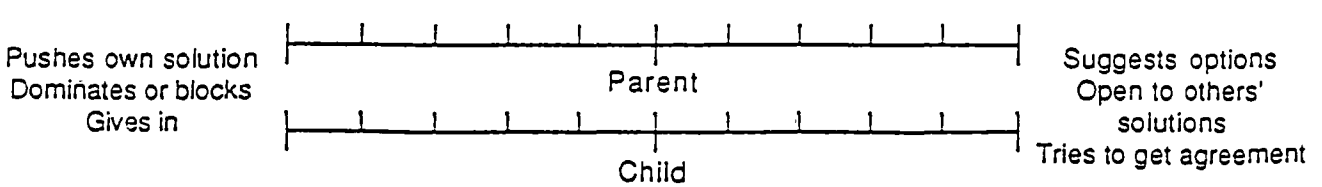
APPROPRIATE ASSERTIVENESS



LISTENING



CONFLICT RESOLUTION



Appendix C: PRETEST MEASURES OF PARENTS

Means and Standard Deviations for pretests of experimental (N = 13) and control (N = 11) parents on the PET behavioural measures, and t tests for the difference between the groups.

	Experimental		Control			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t (22)	p
Lis	-4.92	4.13	-1.70	4.83	-1.77	.0914
Confr	-5.46	3.90	-2.48	4.24	-1.79	.0872
C Res	-4.44	4.78	-2.85	5.49	-0.76	.4565

It can be seen that there is no significant difference between the groups, although initial scores are somewhat larger in the experimental group.

Means and Standard Deviations for pretests of experimental (N = 13) and control (N = 11) parents on the questionnaire measures, and t tests for the difference between the groups.

	Experimental		Control			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t(22)	p
PAS-C	5.85	4. 76	9.00	6.59	-1.36	.1878
PAS-Ca	13.77	7.33	14.36	6.19	-0.21	.8338
PAS-A	13.77	7.73	15.64	5.20	-0.68	.5033
PAS-U	18.08	6.25	18.00	4.49	0.03	.9732
PAS-T	17.08	4.72	16.45	8.20	0.23	.8183
SEI	74.15	16.38	76.27	12.36	-0.35	.7281
F-B I	4.15	2.15	4.00	2.24	0.17	.8655
F-B C	1.85	1.46	1.82	1.94	0.04	.9683
F-B A	3.08	1.90	3.27	2.05	-0.24	.8103

It can be seen that there are no significant differences between experimental and control parent groups on any of the questionnaire pretest measures.

APPENDIX D : PRETEST MEASURES OF CHILDREN

Means and Standard Deviations for pretests of experimental (N = 13) and control (N = 11) children on the PET behavioural measures, and t tests for the difference between the groups.

	Experimental		Control			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t(22)	p
Lis	-2.46	3.98	-0.73	4.25	-1.03	.3141
Confr	-1.82	3.71	0.06	4.08	-1.18	.2499
C Res	-3.33	4.57	0.82	4.85	-2.16	.0421

There are no significant differences between the groups on Active Listening or Confrontation. On Conflict Resolution there is a difference which is significant at the 5% level, but it is the experimental group which is worse, and after treatment this group showed improvement which was significant at the .0167 level.

Means and Standard Deviations for pretests of experimental (N = 13) and control (N = 11) children on the questionnaire measures, and t tests for the difference between the groups.

	Experimental		Control			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	(22)	p
PAS-C	1.77	5.55	0.81	4.21	0.46	.6464
PAS-Ca	8.38	6.69	10.18	5.86	-0.69	.4953
PAS-A	7.4	5.36	7.64	5.57	-0.78	.9384
PAS-U	16.00	4.20	18.73	3.47	-1.71	.1007
PAS-T	17.31	6.58	15.27	5.70	0.80	.4309
SEI	72.46	9.87	71.82	14.29	0.13	.8978
F-B I	5.85	1.52	6.73	1.90	-1.26	.2201
F-B C	2.46	2.02	3.27	2.72	-0.84	.4121
F-B A	4.46	2.44	5.09	2.55	-0.62	.5432

It can be seen that there are no significant differences between the groups.